Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-040 *28 February 1996*

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Islamic Affairs

Islamic Affairs: Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 20 Feb

NC2702194296

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 20 February edition of the Arabic-language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

The newspaper carries several reports, articles, and comments on the occasion of "'Id al-Fitr," marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. The following three items pertain to political Islam:

1. Awqaf Minister Annexes 657 Private Mosques
2. Fasting Said To Cure Anxiety, Depression
3. Writer Praises Ban on State-Funded Pilgrimage

AWQAF MINISTER ANNEXES 657 PRIVATE MOSQUES

A 75-word unattributed report on page 2 says Awqaf Minister Mahmud Hamdi Zaqzuq has annexed 657 private mosques to his ministry and has appointed preachers and other employees to them. He has given priority to appointing those who were running the mosques before their annexation, excluding any "mediation or favoritism."

FASTING SAID TO CURE ANXIETY, DEPRESSION

On page 2 the newspaper runs a 1,000-word investigative report on the benefits of fasting during the month of Ramadan. The report, written by Mustafa Yasin, Amirah Yasin, and Halah al-Sayyid, maintains that fasting has many benefits. Among other things, it cures several ailments, including "anxiety and depression."

WRITER PRAISES BAN ON STATE-FUNDED PILGRIMAGE

A 150-word column by Basyuni al-Halawani praises Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri's decision to ban the State-funded pilgrimage as brave and a reasonable move to protect public funds. The writer maintains that the pilgrimage rite has become a form of showing off by "senior officials" and a heavy burden on the State budget. The writer says that many officials, People's Assembly members, and Consultative Council members have repeatedly performed the pilgrimage at the State's expense, although, according to religion, one pilgrimage is enough. The writer says: "As long as travel and pilgrimage are free, why should they not travel every year?" He thus hints that these officials have been abusing this privilege.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Spokesman on Attacks, Attitude to PA

NC2702171196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1635 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, 27 Feb (MENA)—Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] has blamed Israel for the eruption of terrorism and violence in Palestine by assassinating Yahya 'Ayyash, one of the movement's leaders, in his Gaza house recently.

A Hamas spokesman announced that it halted its operations against Israel before 'Ayyash's assassination in compliance with a request by Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and the Palestinian Authority [PA]. By assassinating 'Ayyash on PA-controlled territory, Israel forced Hamas to retaliate.

The Hamas spokesman made his remarks to MENA's correspondent in Gaza when he commented on the two operations in Jerusalem and Ashqelon that killed 27 Israelis and wounded others two days ago.

The spokesman declared that Hamas wants to maintain Palestinian unity and does not want to embarrass the PA, which is why it carries out its operations in areas not under PA control.

He added that despite this attitude by Hamas, the PA has tightened its measures against the movement and arrested 100 of its members in the past two days.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Military Wing Denies Connection With Bombings

JN2702175096 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Report by Basim Abu-Sumayyah in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a new and important development that might turn everything upside down, the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions, the military wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in Gaza, denied any connection with the 25 February bombings in Jerusalem and Ashqelon. Hamas claimed credit for the attacks in a statement that day.

In a statement carrying the signature of 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions distributed in the Gaza Strip a short while ago, the group said that it had no connection with the two operations and that its stand is based on its eagerness to promote the Palestinian people's interests and not out of fear of anybody. The statement

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emphasized al-Qassam's group commitment to and respect for the agreement it reached with the Palestinian Authority [PA], as the statement put it.

It is to be noted that the group did not announce such an agreement in the past but some Hamas officials said that they reached understanding with the PA last week ending military operations in exchange for protecting the lives of the al-Qassam leaders who are wanted by Israel and allowing them to lead a normal life.

The above mentioned statement expressed surprise at the PA arrest campaign in Gaza since the PA knows fully well that the al-Qassam Battalions have nothing to do with the two operations, as the statement put it.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions Issue Statement

JN2702195196 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Statement issued by 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions in Gaza on 27 February]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. And hold fast, all together, by the rope which God stretches out for you, and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude God's favor on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His grace, ye became brethren. [Koranic verses]

It has been said that the objective of the two operations which were carried out in Jerusalem and Ashqelon was to reply to the allegations that there is an agreement between the National Authority [NA] and the al-Qassam Battalions on halting the military action. We would like to clarify the following:

1. The 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions in the Gaza Strip has nothing to do whatsoever with these two operations.

2. We are committed to our agreement with the NA, and we reiterate our respect for it.

3. We announce this stand out of our concern for our people's interests, and not out of fear of anybody. So help us, God.

[Signed] 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions, the Gaza Strip, 27 February 1996

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Claims Responsibility for Jerusalem Bus Stop Killing

NC2802130796 Paris AFP in English 1300 GMT Feb 28 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, Feb 28 (AFP) - The militant Palestinian group Hamas on Wednesday [28 February] claimed responsibility for the killing of an Israeli woman in a car crash at a Jerusalem bus stop.

It said that Ahmad 'Abd-al-Hamidah, an Arab-American who was shot dead after driving his car into the crowded bus stop on Tuesday, was a member of the Islamic fundamentalist group's armed wing 'Izz-al- Din al-Qassam.

"This heroic operation was carried out in memory of Fathi al- Shaqaqi," leader of a smaller militant group, Islamic Jihad, who was killed by suspected Israeli agents in Malta in October, Hamas said in a statement distributed in Damascus.

Israeli police said the incident at the bus stop was believed to be an attack, after earlier reports of an accident.

'Abd-al-Hamidah, a 36-year-old naturalized US citizen from California, killed a woman and injured 22 people.

Fearing another anti-Israeli attack following Sunday's double suicide bombings claimed by Hamas that killed 27 people, armed civilians shot dead 'Abd-al-Hamidah when he got out of the car.

Police said an Islamic Jihad leaflet was found in 'Abd-al- Hamidah's rented car.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Spokesman Refutes Rumors of Agreement With Authority

MM2802120096 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 27 Feb 96 p 5

[Unattributed report: "Hamas Denies Agreement With Palestinian Authority"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Mustafa al-Liddawi, Hamas' representative in Lebanon, has told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Beirut that the Jerusalem and Ashqelon operations confirm that the Palestinians are continuing the resistance "despite the rumors the Palestinian Authority tried to circulate recently, namely that the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions had reached an agreement in principle with the Palestinian Authority under which they would suspend armed action in return for preserving the lives of their elements."

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Palestinian Affairs: 12 Hamas Activists Detained in Bethlehem Area

TA2802092696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian security forces continue to detain Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that 12 Hamas activists were detained last night in the Bethlehem area under Palestinian control.

Palestinian Affairs: PA Prepared To Discuss Demands on Fighting 'Terrorism'

TA2702122896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian Authority [PA] is prepared to discuss Israel's detailed demands on fighting terrorism in the wake of the latest terrorist attacks.

A senior PA source told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that Yasir 'Arafat is scheduled to meet Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq on that issue tonight. Senior defense and intelligence representatives from both sides are to participate in the meeting.

Palestinian Affairs: Source on Palestinian, Israeli Extremists Connection

JN2802112996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting on reports by Israeli media that the perpetrators of the Jerusalem and Ashqelon operations are from al-Fawwar camp, an official Palestinian source said: This announcement came 48 hours after the two terrorist operations. An hour after the operations, Rehav'am Ze'evi, leader of the extremist Moledet movement and advocate of the transfer of Palestinians, told Israeli television that the people who carried out the operation are from Hebron. Ze'evi confirmed that he knew about the operation, just as the Eyal organization knew about the [Islamic] Jihad operations.

The official spokesman said that in statements to Israeli newspaper (YORUSHALAYIM), Avishay Raviv admitted this relationship between his organization, Eyal, and the Palestinian extremists.

Palestinian Affairs: PFLP Reaches Accord With PA on 'Democratic Struggle'

TA2702173896 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 24 Feb 96 p 9

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Bethlehem, QUDS PRESS — The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], led by George Habash, has stated that following a stage of tension, it has reached agreement with the Palestinian Authority [PA] on organizing relations between the two sides. The agreement is to become effective in the West Bank area.

A statement distributed in Bethlehem asserts that the agreement stipulates that the Palestinian Police will halt the campaign of arrests of PFLP activists. To date, 13 PFLP members accused of participating in attacks against Israelis have been detained in this campaign.

The statement promises that the PFLP, which opposes the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles, will adhere to what it called "the democratic struggle" against the self-rule agreement. The statement rules out the use of any other means in its relationship with the PA.

The statement explains that the PFLP considers democratic struggle the focus of its activity inside the self-rule territories and says that this activity "will not take on other form." The statement points out that "the PFLP does not allow any serious harm to befall the soldiers and officers of the PA." [passage omitted]

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Savir Cited on Israeli Positions on Talks With Syria

TA2802101096 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 28 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by Hillel Kuttler in Washington]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Israeli-Syrian peace talks, which resume in Maryland today, are to focus on a peacetime separation of forces, peace process coordinator Uri Savir told Israeli reporters yesterday. [passage omitted]

Savir said he did not anticipate that either the upcoming Israeli elections or Sunday's [25 February] terror bombings would affect Syria's posture in the talks.

"I think the presence of progress is not a function of how they see Palestinian terror. The security problems here are much more far-reaching with the Syrians," he said.

Israel is approaching the talks "with the assumption that the Syrians are prepared for a more pragmatic approach. Six days of work is (enough time) for some content... I think that all in all, there's a willingness for progress from our side, but I don't see any possibility of a breakthrough in such a short period, even if there weren't elections," Savir said.

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An Israeli official said here that in approaching final status talks with the Palestinians this spring, Jerusalem views as red lines any division of Jerusalem and the return of Palestinian refugees to Israeli territory. [passage omitted]

The official also stated that in any agreement with Damascus, "we have very little, if any, flexibility" in compromising over Israeli water sources, with "75 percent" of Lake Tiberias' supply coming from the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, and that the sides will have to seek a solution based on "objective water needs." [passage omitted]

[A related report by Washington correspondent Avino'am Bar-Yosef on pages 1 and 2 of Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew on 28 February adds that "in the framework of the preliminary meetings held in recent days, which included a preparatory meeting between Savir and Syrian Ambassador Walid al-Mu'allim," "the chief Syrian delegate announced that President Hafiz al-Asad believes another round of talks with the Israelis on the eve of the Israeli elections scheduled for end of May is redundant."

[The report further states that "the sides agreed in the preliminary discussions to focus the upcoming discussions on the security arrangements that will be part of the future peace accord."]

Arab-Israeli Talks: Radio Reports Ross Meeting With Israeli, Syrian Delegations

JN2802132596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the Middle East peace process, met separately with the Syrian and Israeli delegations to the peace negotiations in Washington to review the agenda of the new round of talks, which begins today in the U.S. State of Maryland.

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Egypt

Egypt: Minister—'Foreign Forces' Seeking To Harm Ties With Saudis

NC2402201996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1940 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 24 Feb (MENA)—Ahmad al-'Amawi, minister of manpower and immigration, has stressed that the Egyptian-Saudi relations are in their best shape ever. He said the rights of Egyptian workers [in Saudi Arabia] are secure and there is an understanding at the highest level between the two countries in this respect.

In a statement this evening to the People's Assembly's Manpower Committee, which is chaired by al-Sayyid Rashid, Minister al-'Amawi said press reports on problems faced by Egyptian workers are spread by foreign forces that seek to harm the special relations between Egypt and Saudi Arabia for their own purposes. He pointed out that the problems of the Egyptian workers there are similar to the problems faced by workers in Egypt. [passage omitted]

Egypt: Egyptians' Rights Allegedly Abused in Gulf Arab States

NC2602200696 Paris AFP in English 1927 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 26 (AFP) — The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights denounced "violations of the rights" of Egyptian workers abroad, blaming both Cairo and Gulf Arab governments for their plight in a report issued Monday [26 February].

"The violations of the rights of Egyptian workers in the Arab oil-producing countries, especially in the Gulf, in the last few years reflects the lack of political and legal protection for them," the study said.

The rights group blamed the violations on "neglect by the Egyptian government which fails to guarantee these workers' rights and the lack of legislation assuring their rights in the host countries." It denounced in particular the "sponsor system in the Gulf which reflects the discrimination between workers with citizenship in the host country and immigrants."

A statistical study included in the report prepared by Egyptian professor Nadir Farghani said 47 percent of immigrant workers believe they are discriminated against compared to nationals "who work less and earn more." It said 58 percent of the immigrants "have no work contract and only 15 percent were able to bring their families with them due to strict regulations imposed by the host countries."

There are 900,000 Egyptians working under the sponsor system used in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Under the system, workers are placed "under the sponsorship of a Gulf national who can confiscate their passport, stop them from changing jobs, refuse to pay their salaries and throw them out of the country at any time," the report said.

Remittances from Egyptians working abroad represent the country's biggest source of foreign income, totalling six billion dollars according to official statistics.

Egypt: Al-Baz Criticizes Human Rights Interference

NC2602212096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1930 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Luxor, 26 Feb (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has accused some world powers of exploiting human rights and democracy issues to benefit their own political interests and using them to interfere in the African countries' internal affairs. He asserted that the international community must deal with human rights issues in an impartial and equal manner.

Dr. al-Baz made these remarks in a speech he delivered today to the opening session of the Conference of the International Federation of African and Middle Eastern University Presidents in Luxor. He noted that all countries have pledged to promote and defend human rights and to fulfill the commitments that they made in line with international law and the UN Charter.

Al-Baz emphasized that all countries must be treated equally and without discrimination and that their distinctive and diverse regional characteristics should be taken into account, including such things as historical, social, cultural, and religious backgrounds.

Referring to the violations of the sovereignty of various countries in the context of disarmament and arms reduction, Dr. Usamah al-Baz asserted that the great powers constantly violate the sovereignty of other countries, particularly Third World countries.

He said that the indefinite extension of the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty can also be viewed as a form of violation because it gives the nuclear powers the right to remain in possession of nuclear arms for an indefinite period.

Dr. al-Baz explained that even before the appearance of international law, the concept of a state's sovereignty was well established as an important principle of law, without which a state cannot function.

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He said that when international law first appeared and was widely accepted by the international community, the principle of sovereignty and the principle of nonintervention in a country's internal affairs were enshrined as basic pillars of the international order. He explained that these two principles have helped countries in various parts of the world to carry out their duties, consolidate their liberty, and defend themselves against colonialist pressures. This, al-Baz pointed out, helped the international community to establish the principle of equality among nations.

He continued: We have a right to express astonishment that the appearance of the so-called new world order following the end of the Cold War and the abrupt disappearance of the bipolar world order have brought to the fore new concepts that constitute blatant violations of the rights of countries to enjoy sovereignty and be safe from foreign intervention.

Al-Baz explained that in the late 1980's and early 1990's Western political experts began to suggest that the new world order had developed in such a way as to turn the world into a global village where interdependence is the chief principle.

He said: Based on the above, such indisputable legal concepts as a country's sovereignty and its right to be safe from foreign intervention began to be viewed as part of the legacy of the old world order.

Dr. al-Baz said that the justification for expressing this new ideology was that anything that happens in any region of the world will inevitably affect other regions.

He noted that these new concepts have developed because of several factors, most importantly the revolution in and progress in the mass media, growing fears of environmental and health hazards to mankind, a failure of a sound prediction of the relationship between the end of the cold war and the disappearance of armed conflicts, and the prediction that the role of religion and nationalism in the structure of the world order will gradually lessen.

Al-Baz clarified that these concepts emerged and developed in the West, or more correctly in the north, without real contributions by scientists and intellectuals from Third World countries.

Al-Baz noted that environmental degradation has become the object of great concern in recent decades. He said industrial nations fully realized that pollution in particular has begun to pose a serious threat to the quality of human life. This life, he added, is now being basically measured in terms of the growth in material output.

He said that African countries, like other Third World countries, have become certain that one of the most serious problems that threaten development now and in future is the deterioration of natural resources.

Al-Baz said: I believe that the solution to continued development is that the north's needs have to be met in a way that does not endanger the south's needs now and in the future.

He emphasized that the south believes that the cause of most of the world's current environmental degradation is due to the patterns of production and consumption in the North.

He said it is now certain that environmental policies cannot be imposed and that environmental protection policies should be adopted in line with economic growth, with the challenges imposed by growth, and with the resources available.

He added that the main problem facing the developing nations regarding environmental procedures and trade is for these countries not to confront each other with explicit government-mandated barriers such as tariffs. In addition, he noted, these countries will face other measures including the setting of various standards, like brand names, packaging, and recycling requirements. These, he went on, should not necessarily be imposed by governments but by the companies involved.

He emphasized that several very clear points should be adhered to—that is to say, environmental measures should not be imposed unilaterally. If countries like ours call for adopting trail measures to protect the environment, adequate funds must be available for this goal.

He said the countries of the north should supply us with the technology necessary to effect the desired changes to introduce new standards and charters on environment.

Dr. al-Baz noted that the relationship between poverty and environmental deterioration should not be ignored. He said: We must identify the root causes of abject poverty in the developing nations and the required measures and procedures that should be adopted both at national and international levels to eliminate poverty to help the developing nations in their efforts to achieve continuous development.

He added that these measures should include a sharp reduction in the debts under which the south is laboring and an increase in state aid for advanced development in the developing countries. The aim, he noted, is for this development to reach at least the previously agreed-upon rate, which is seven percent of the gross national product. Then commodity prices should be amended to

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take into consideration the environmental cost of grain production and improving the chances of grain reaching the north's markets. This, he said, should be done by removing various forms of tariffs and all barriers that hinder the efforts of developing nations to boost exports of competitive goods.

He said that Addis Ababa will host the first conference of African ministers in charge of continuous development and environment on 8 march.

Egypt: Al-Jama'ah Statement Warns Sudan Not To Answer 'Blackmail'

NC2702200296 Paris AFP in English 1954 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 27 (AFP)—The Egyptian militant group the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah warned Sudan on Tuesday [27 February] not to implement a UN resolution demanding that Khartoum hand over three of its members to Ethiopia.

"We call on Sudan's government not to respond to blackmail by the Egyptian regime and the UN Security Council and not to turn its land into a battlefield with the Mujahidin (Islamic warriors) as Pakistan has," the outlawed group said in a statement.

The UN passed a resolution last month demanding that Sudan extradite to Ethiopia three al-Jama'ah members accused of take part in a failed bid to assassinate Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June. But the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah (Islamic Group) warned that Sudan's "battle with the Mujahidin will not save it from the hands of its enemies."

"If the noose tightens around us, then let it tighten around others as well. No more than a handful of Mujahidin can cause unprecedented casualties," it warned. However, the al-Jama'ah said its three militants "are not in the territory of Sudan."

Cairo, which backed the Security Council resolution, has accused Khartoum of supporting the al-Jama'ah in three-year militant campaign in Egypt to overthrow Mubarak's government.

Egypt: Suspects Questioned on al-Sharqiyah Riots

NC2602161496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1532 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Feb (MENA) — The Public Prosecutor's Office has taken 77 suspects into custody for interrogation for 15 days. The suspects took part in riots in the al-Sharqiyah Governorate — in the eastern part of the Nile Delta — last Saturday [24 February].

Security sources reported that the Public Prosecutor's Office sent three suspects to a youth detention facility and instructed a medical examiner to determine the ages of 10 other suspects.

The riots occurred in the village of Kafr Dimyan when some citizens tried to break into the Virgin Mary Church and set fire to piles of hay and animal sheds located near the villagers' homes.

Egypt: Papers Fear Adverse Effects of Bombings on Peace

NC2802082996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2155 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Feb (MENA)—The newspapers AL-AHRAM and AL-JUMHURIYAH warn of the adverse effects that last Sunday's [25 February] bombings in Jerusalem and Ashqelon might have on the peace process, not because they were the biggest suicide operations since the establishment of Israel, but because Israeli opinion polls have shown a decline in the popularity of Shim'on Peres, whose election campaign relies on completing the peace process.

In an editorial appearing on Wednesday, AL-JUMHURIYAH says that the two bombings and the subsequent incident at the Jerusalem bus station have been correctly described as an attempt by hasty and shortsighted extremists to block the peace process. The paper adds that the only way to confront this attempt is to expedite peace efforts on all negotiating tracks. It points out that the alternative is very dangerous and the region's nations are not willing to turn back the clock.

AL-JUMHURIYAH urges the resumption of the negotiations over the final status of the Palestinian territories as soon as possible—without waiting for Israeli elections. It also calls for the Syrian-Israeli negotiations in Washington to be held in a spirit of objectivity and a desire for peace. It declares that Israeli attacks on south Lebanon should stop as a prelude to negotiations on the Lebanese-Israeli track, so that the entire peace process can be completed.

AL-AHRAM says that the bombings in Jerusalem and Ashqelon, Israel's subsequent suspension of the peace talks, its closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and canceling Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's visit to Nabulus have cast a dark shadow over the peace settlement in Palestine.

The paper reaffirms that continuing the peace process is the best approach to different climate and new ideas about coexistence. It points out that only a peace

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offensive can ease the tensions and contain the violence, on condition that this peace be just and able to create an atmosphere of popular acceptance. If it can do that, it will pacify feelings and contain any violent tendencies in this volatile and sensitive region.

Egypt: Commentary Urges Self-Restraint, End to Violence

NC2702160696 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Commentary by Samir 'Abd-al-Tawwab: "Self-Restraint and Patience"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Minutes after the two suicide attacks in Jerusalem and Ashqelon, Egyptian diplomacy voiced its stance and called on all the parties to exercise self-restraint. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry spokesman stressed that the two explosions in Jerusalem and Ashqelon constitute a return to practices that should stop in line with the peace process. They should be condemned and sorrow expressed for the victims. The spokesman also appealed to all the parties to resort to reason, exercise self-restraint, and not take any measures that might provoke the other party or make it hostile. The Egyptian spokesman also stressed Egypt's firm stance on the need to continue the peace process and urged all the parties to stop any measures that could impede or harm this process.

Thus, from the first minutes, Egypt was eager to point out the danger of resorting to violence, which can only breed counter violence. Egypt and President Mubarak have repeatedly warned of this danger and also warned of the possible negative consequences of increased violence as the region heads toward the final phase of the peace arrangements. As President Mubarak said a few weeks ago, we are going through a new historic stage full of hopes and challenges, a stage that calls for vigilance and full awareness of the dangers threatening the peace process. As President Mubarak also stressed, every form and shade of terrorism must be denounced regardless of its origins. Our experience in creating peace asserts that the current challenges are mighty. So the parties must have good intentions, a real desire to achieve comprehensive peace, and they must work seriously to dissipate doubts and fears and deepen mutual trust.

We need to pause at these three points. Good intentions are indispensable. There can be no trust between the Arab and the Israeli parties in general and between the Palestinians and Israelis in particular if the good intentions are not there. Hence, good intentions are a decisive factor in confirming and continuing the peace process and ensuring its fruition and permanence.

The real desire to achieve comprehensive peace is the second of these factors reflecting the good intentions and stressing the parties' seriousness about getting rid of the complexities of the past, acclimatizing themselves to the regional and international situation, and committing themselves fully to granting each party its rights as strong evidence of the real desire to achieve comprehensive peace.

The third factor concerns serious action to dissipate the doubts and fears and deepen mutual trust. Dissipating doubts is extremely important, particularly for difficult and complex issues that have a long and complicated history of conflict and hatred. When we talk about dissipating doubts, we ought to warn against statements made for local consumption on special occasions, such as the imminent elections. Such statements give the impression that some parties do not view the concept of the peace process seriously and thereby increase the doubts, resulting in tension and misunderstandings that lead to more acts of violence and counter violence, the most lethal danger facing the peace process.

Briefly, the time has come for the parties involved in the peace process to exercise self-restraint and be patient until the process is completed, making everybody live in peace.

Morocco

Morocco: King Hassan Sends Condolences To Peres Over Bombings

LD2702215496 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the two bombings which have left Israeli victims His Majesty King Hassan II has sent a cable of condolence to the Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in which he has expressed his profound dismay and deep regret for the criminal acts which he has firmly condemned.

The king has offered in the same cable his condolences to the families of the innocent victims and congratulated the Israeli prime minister on his brave and highly responsible announcement which would safeguard the continuity of the peace process for the good of the region.

Morocco: Accords Signed With EU on Partnership, Fisheries

LD2702141696 Rabat MAP in English 1318 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Brussels, Feb. 27 (MAP) — The European Union (E.U) and Morocco signed

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Monday [26 February] in Brussels two accords, one on partnership, the third to be concluded by the E.U with its southern Mediterranean partners after Tunisia and Israel, and the other on fisheries.

A joint communique published at the end of the signing ceremony says that the partnership agreement which replaces the 1976 cooperation accord, is concluded for an indefinite period of time. It mainly calls for a regular political dialogue, the establishment step by step of a free trade zone in conformity with the provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO) related to liberalization of services, free circulation of capital, promotion of economic cooperation on the largest possible scale in all bilateral fields, a social cooperation completed by a cultural one, and financial cooperation providing for support of Morocco's efforts in its economic reforms.

According to the communique, this accord will further strengthen "the excellent" ties between the European communities and Morocco through the setting up of balanced relations based on reciprocity, partnership and co-development in respect of the democratic principles and of human rights.

As to the four-year term fisheries agreement, concluded after several months of negotiations following a bruising quarrel over fishing rights, the communique says that the fishing possibilities granted every year during this period take into account the two parties's concern to share and preserve sea resources and the necessity to grant necessary time to achieve a progressive restructuring of the community's fleet operating offshore Moroccan waters.

In order to see to the respect of the accord provisions, cooperation between the two parties in [the] matter of control has been innovated and strengthened by a specific status for scientific observers, and through the setting up of a mutual observation system of control at land in each party's port and by satellite-monitoring of fishing fleet.

The accord also provides for mandatory and optional unloading of catches in Moroccan harbors, and for a 500 million ECUs [European Currency Units] package as compensation measures divided as follows: 8 million ECUs for training, 16 millions for scientific research in the fisheries sector, 121 millions in favor of a long-term development of this sector in Morocco, and the remaining 335 millions as a direct compensation payable in four sliding annual installments.

Sudan

Sudan: Justice Minister Discusses Mubarak Suspects With UN Envoy

EA2702200396 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. 'Abd-al-Aziz Shiddu, minister of justice and attorney general, met at his office this morning [27 February] the UN secretary general's special envoy, Mr. (Shinamay Ferrekhan), who is currently visiting the country on an assignment concerning the steps taken and arrangements made by the Sudanese Government in respect of those suspected of involvement in the attempt to assassinate President Husni Mubarak, and who the Ethiopian authorities claim have infiltrated into Sudan.

Mr. Shiddu said that during the meeting they had discussed the implications, and Sudan's interpretation, of UN Security Council Resolution 44, in the light of (?article) six of the UN Charter, which stipulates the need to cooperate with the OAU committee for conflict resolution with the aim of finding a solution to the Ethiopian-Sudanese dispute over the suspects claimed to be in Sudan.

The minister of justice added that they had also reviewed article b of the resolution, which deals with the sponsorship of terrorism. In this context, he briefed the UN envoy on the steps taken by the Sudanese authorities toward abolishing earlier laws which had permitted any Arab passport-holder to enter Sudan without a visa. This had been done, he said, in addition to Sudan's condemnation of all forms of terrorism and in particular the attempt to assassinate President Mubarak.

He said that the UN envoy accepted Sudan's views on the matter and promised to convey them to the UN secretary general.

Sudan: Al-Bashir Says Khartoum To Cooperate With UN on 3 Fugitives

AB2702221196 Paris AFP in English 2202 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Khartoum, Feb 27 (AFP) — Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir told a UN envoy on Tuesday [27 February] that his government would "cooperate fully" with Security Council demands that it extradite three fugitive Moslem militants.

Al-Bashir told the UN's Chinmaya Gharekhan [as received] a commission had been formed to help security officials who are "continuing their search for the suspects", state television said.

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The president assured Gharekhan of his government's "willingness to fully cooperate with the Security Council and all concerned parties." [passage omitted]

Sudan: Vice President Inspects Wreckage of Crashed Aircraft

EA2702200096 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] General al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih, first vice president of the Republic, accompanied by Staff Lieutenant General Hasan 'Abd-al-rahman, defense minister, has visited the site where the military aircraft had crashed, west of Jabal Awliya [south of Khartoum]. His Excellency went to the site of the crash to inspect the progress of work being done by Air Force engineers.

The first vice president and the accompanying delegation said prayers at the crash site. [passage omitted]

The general command of the Armed Forces commended the role performed by the citizens of the al-Shaykh al-Tayyib area, who extended all necessary assistance. [passage omitted]

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Bahrain

Bahrain: Exiled Oppositionist Says No Danger to Foreigners in Bahrain

MM2702152596 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 27 Feb 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Bahraini Opposition Leader Says: No Danger to Foreigners"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI — Prominent Bahraini oppositionist 'Ali Salman has stressed that there is no danger to foreign workers in Bahrain, saying that "the presence of foreigners in Gulf states is normal [tabi'i]."

Shaykh 'Ali Salman, one of three oppositionists expelled in January 1995, said that the Bahraini opposition will continue its peaceful methods, such as holding rallies in villages, writing slogans on walls, and collecting signatures on petitions. He stressed that current violent actions are merely "isolated reactions, not the general orientation of the people's movement."

Salman, who lives in London, stressed that the Bahraini opposition's moves are not sectarian. They are aimed at restoring the national assembly that was dissolved in 1975 in order to initiate a serious dialogue with the detained opposition leaders "such as Ahmad al-Shamlan and Shaykh al-Jamri."

Shaykh Salman expects confrontation actions to continue during the economic conference to be held in Manama on 10 March in the framework of "rhetorical, not destructive, violence." He said "the situation will not be calm, but it will not hamper the conference proceedings."

Bahrain: Prime Minister Visits Information Ministry, Speaks on Situation

JN2702161996 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1435 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 27 Feb (WAKH)— Bahraini Prime Minister His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah made an inspection tour of the Information Ministry complex in the 'Isa city today.

His highness held an expanded meeting with the senior ministry officials, attended by Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa', minister of cabinet affairs and information, and the local newspapers editors-in-chief.

During the meeting, the prime minister expressed his appreciation for the role played by the local news media and writers in confronting all attempts to plot against and to encroach on the homeland's achievements.

The prime minister said: This stage necessitates that we close our ranks against those who seek to fragment the sons of the one people. The acts of sabotage in our country, which aim to disrupt security and stability, fall within the framework of the attempts targeting the security and stability of our Gulf region with the objective of achieving the interests of foreign parties which seek a foothold to achieve their objectives.

His highness added: We all, government and people, stand united in confronting these dangers posed to us. We will not allow any tendentious group to infiltrate our ranks to create estrangement among us. This is because this homeland is for all of us. We will spare no effort to continue the march of development and to safeguard the homeland's security and stability.

On the terrorism phenomenon, the prime minister said: Terrorism has no homeland. We tell anyone who shelters terrorism, inside or outside, that he will be responsible for any accident against any innocent citizen, whose life or interests are endangered. The states which provide safe havens for terrorism should realize that they will not be able to contain this terrorism in the future, because it will extend to them.

The Bahraini prime minister said: Bahrain is in a good shape, and its security situation is stable thanks to cooperation between citizens and security men. Nothing will prevent us from continuing our development plans and from modernizing our administrative and technical organs.

His highness thanks every Bahraini citizen who performs his work sincerely and faithfully to serve and support his country, pointing out: We are always proud of these honest people who work tirelessly to achieve further progress and prosperity for all.

Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa', minister of cabinet affairs and information, gave a speech on behalf of the Cabinet Affairs and Information Ministry officials, in which he thanked the prime minister for this visit to the Information Ministry, and for meeting with its officials. He stressed that this visit will encourage everyone to exert further efforts to serve our dear Bahrain, and to carry the sincere and noble media message.

Kuwait

Kuwait: Papers Cite King Husayn's '1994' Interviews

NC2402204196 Cairo MENA in English 1414 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait, Feb 24 (MENA)— Signalling the return of Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations, Kuwaiti dailies today released two interviews conducted with King Husayn of Jordan in October 1994 that were embargoed then.

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The Jordanian monarch denied he was ever for the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait or that he was aware of it before it actually occurred, he told "AL-QABAS".

The problem was that he was calling for giving an Arab formula and negotiations with Iraqi President Saddam Husayn a chance that would guarantee the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, he said.

He tried to solve the issue within an Arab context but failed, he added.

He also denied that any preconditions were set for reconciliation between Jordan and Kuwait in the exchange of messages between the crown princes of the two countries.

King Husayn in his interview with "AL-QABAS" called on the Iraqi opposition to send clear messages to the Iraqi people to close ranks.

He further said that contacts between his country and Jordan [as received] are no longer open and said they are only held as regards easing the sufferings of the Iraqi people.

He further said that for a long time now he can not understand the policy followed by the Iraqi command.

He denied reports claiming that there were U.S. bases and planes in Jordan to monitor Iraq.

On the Mideast peace process, the Jordanian king expressed his country's support for the Palestinians in their final-stage negotiations with the Israelis.

He urged Jerusalem to be the symbol of peace in the area.

He further said that normalization with Israel will need time.

In his interview with "AL-SIYASAH" he said that Jordanian arms and ammunition left behind by the Iraqis in Kuwait arrived to Iraq in the name of the Jordanian Army with funds paid by the Gulf Cooperation Council states during the Iraq-Iran war.

The GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] countries were the states that opened the letters of credits for these arms, he said.

The presence of these arms in Kuwait is not an evidence that Jordan was involved in the invasion of Kuwait, he said.

He denied that the idea of setting up the Arab Cooperation Council was to contain the Arabian Peninsula.

The aim of the Council was to close the Arab ranks of the Arab states that were not included in any federations, he said.

Syria was to be included in the Council but its status in the Council hinged upon the resumption to ties between Iraq and Syria, he said.

Kuwait: Government Said To Oppose Jordanian Envoy of Palestinian Origin

TA2702193096 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 26 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH — Informed sources have said that the Kuwaiti Government has hinted to its Jordanian counterpart that it wants the new Jordanian ambassador to Kuwait to be of east Jordanian or non-Palestinian origin.

The same sources said that Kuwait has also demanded that the new Jordanian ambassador be pro-Kuwait, which opposed Iraq in the recent Gulf war.

It is being said in Amman that the intention is to appoint 'Awad Abu-'Ubayd, the current Jordanian ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, as Jordan's ambassador to Kuwait, especially as the chances of someone else getting this assignment have diminished. In the past, there was talk of appointing Dr. Amin Mahmud as ambassador to Kuwait, but Dr. Mahmud is of Palestinian origin, and Kuwait objects to this.

Kuwait: Editorial Views 'Acquiescence' to Islamic Movement

96LH0083A Kuwait AL-QABAS in Arabic 9 Jan 96 p 33

[Editorial by 'Abd-al-Latif al-Du'ayj: "Take the Government Too"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The government's acquiescence to the Islamic tendency will cost it a lot and will cost the people even more needless ordeals and crises. This is because this tendency's demands and claims will stop at no end and because its ambitions will not be satisfied by the government's acquiescence here or there. This tendency does its utmost to impose its own concepts on all people "forcefully." This by itself is in conflict with the state's regime and its political structure.

Religion is a relationship between man and his God, and it is supposed to stay so. The state is a political entity and a social system, and it, too, is supposed to stay so. We find no reason for this governmental enthusiasm to bolster the Islamic political tendencies and no justification for this blind submission to them. These tendencies will not stop at any limit and will not be content with a little or with a touch-up the government applies here or there. They seek to impose their own concepts and their specific interpretations of

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the nature of man's relationship with his Lord and the relationship between beings. The government does not need to be reminded that these groups have detailed and precise programs on how to manage society and that they will forever continue to submit these programs and to demand their implementation.

The alms tax is a duty God has imposed on Muslims, but it is not the only duty. It is preceded and followed by many duties. Today, while it acquiesces to the calls to Islamicize the state and while it issues a law with which to collect the zakat [alms tax], which is one of the five compulsory Islamic duties, the government compels itself, also forcefully, to adopt the other duties. Prayers, like the zakat, are also a duty awaiting somebody to force the people to perform it. The same goes for the pilgrimage and to fasting. The government cannot select and choose or favor one duty over another. It cannot be Islamic economically and secular socially or politically.

To date, we don't know how the government will apply the zakat law and how it will resolve the overlapping and partnership between Muslims and non-Muslims. However, we are confident that decades will pass before government ministries develop the method and conditions to apply the law. We hope that the government is not wagering that the Islamic tendency will forget or will back down on its demands. Those who have opened the zakat door will open other easier, broader, and more numerous doors.

Yesterday, we proposed that Mr. al-Mas'ari take some of our radicals so he and they will keep each other company in the Island of Dominica. Yesterday, al-Mas'ari complained that the island does not have enough security men to protect him. Today, he has absolutely no excuse. From Kuwait, we will send him a people and a government that is one of the region's governments most experienced in security.

Yemen

Yemen: President Salih Refuses To Accuse Israel in Island Dispute

NC2702192096 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Statement by Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salim to MBC correspondent Hasan Zaytuni in Sanaa on 27 February—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Because the brothers in Eritrea have had strong ties with Yemen, we suspect there has been foreign instigation. We do not accuse Israel. Perhaps they [the Eritreans] want us to accuse Israel so that they will benefit from Israel. Perhaps this is their intention. But we do not accuse Israel. We accuse Eritrea, which has occupied the [Hanish al-Kabir] island. Yes, Eritrea has Israeli equipment. Yes, Eritrea has Israeli experts. But we do not accuse Israel.

Yemen: Yacht Flying British Flag Reportedly Fired On Near Hanish

MM2702155596 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 27 Feb 96 p 4

[Report by 'Abd-al-Salam al-Tahir: "Yemeni Sources Say: British Yacht Fired at Near Hanish"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Aden, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Aden port sources told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday that the captain of a yacht raising a British flag had informed the port authorities that Eritrean forces fired on his yacht while sailing nearly three nautical miles off Hanish al-Kabir island in the Red Sea.

According to the sources the yacht, named "Imaksandar" [as transliterated], arrived in Aden port on 22 February, and the captain informed officials in charge of refueling in the port of the incident. However, British Foreign Office and Lloyds officials in London have said that they have no knowledge of such an incident.

The sources in Aden said that the captain thanked the Yemeni forces present on the other islands of the archipelago for instructing the ships sailing near the archipelago to move away four nautical miles from the islands.

Meanwhile, 'Abduh 'Ali 'Abd-al-Rahman, Yemeni deputy foreign minister, has ruled out the possibility of convening any meeting at present between Yemeni and Eritrean officials, whether at the bilateral level or in the presence of other parties, to discuss the dispute between the two sides over the Yemeni island of Hanish al-Kabir. [passage omitted]

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Iraq: Baghdad 'Calm'; 'Udayy Reportedly Orders 'Aziz Arrest

JN2702122396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1125 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Report from the "With the Midday Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Western diplomats in Baghdad said today that calm is prevailing in the Iraqi capital and that they cannot confirm Western media reports on the outbreak of clashes at the presidential palace in Baghdad and the tightening of security measures. Travelers arriving in Baghdad from Tikrit and Mosul said they have no information on clashes in Tikrit.

The KUWAITI NEWS AGENCY said yesterday that battles were being waged at the presidential palace in Baghdad and gunfire was being exchanged in the city of Tikrit, the hometown of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, between the followers of the Iraqi president and the supporters of Husayn Kamil as a result of the killing of Husayn Kamil Hasan late last week after he returned from Amman.

Iraqi opposition sources said that armed clashes occurred in various parts of Iraq, particularly in Baghdad, after the killing of Husayn Kamil Hasan. The sources added that the fierce confrontations, which lasted two hours in al-'Uja, resulted in the killing and wounding of many persons. The sources said that the Iraqi regime sent heavy military equipment to Karbala' and al-Najaf.

It was also reported that the Iraqi president's son, 'Udayy, issued an order to arrest Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz. Reports from Amman said that Husayn Kamil Hasan's two sisters, their sons, and one of their husbands were killed in Baghdad on 25 February. These reports by the Iraqi opposition sources have not been officially confirmed by any other party.

Iraq: Rebel Radio Reports Clashes Around 'Udayy's Palace

JN2702144096 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1315 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Explosions and heavy exchange of fire were heard in the al-Radwaniyah area near Baghdad last Sunday evening. Our sources say that news leaking from the palace of the short-tempered 'Udayy in al-Radwaniyah say that an armed group hurled hand grenades inside the palace and clashed with the guards of the main gate in an attempt to break into the palace.

Our sources add that a special unit owing allegiance to the murderous 'Udayy took positions outside the palace walls and on the road leading to the capital.

Over the past three days, news agencies have been reporting clashes between elements owing allegiance to the tyrant and his two sons, 'Udayy and Qusayy, on the one hand, and groups belonging to Husayn Kamil in Tikrit and its suburbs.

Iraq: Mujahidin Leaflets Ask People To Disobey Regime

JN2702145996 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1315 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The devout mujahidin distributed leaflets and statements in many Baghdad areas and in other governorates. Our sources say that the mujahidin groups distributed huge piles of leaflets in the al-Thawrah and al-Kazimiyah cities and in central Baghdad streets. Sources say that the leaflets appealed to our people to escalate the level of the fight against the regime and renounce all kinds of cooperation with it.

The leaflets asked the people not to pay taxes and their electricity, water, and telephone bills which have been unjustly increasing since the beginning of this year. The leaflets asked the employees and workers to demand an increase in salaries and that they be given the same rates paid to the tyrant's henchmen and his special security elements.

In their statements, the mujahidin said that the serious conditions and the moves looming on the horizon oblige everybody to take practical stands and side with the nation's mujahidin, and to lend effective support to the heroic mujahidin operations.

Iraq: Rebel Radio Says Curfew in Tikrit, State of Alert in Baghdad

NC2702152796 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1440 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports from Tikrit say the town has become isolated from other Iraqi towns. The 'Aflaqi authorities have imposed a curfew on Tikrit and Samarra'. The reports add that the Saddam regime has prevented citizens from the governorates from entering Baghdad, where the authorities have declared maximum alert for fear things will get out of control following Friday's massacre of Husayn Kamil and members of his family.

Iraq: Saddam's Brother Reportedly Placed Under House Arrest

NC2702153296 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI] has stated that the

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Iraqi president's brother [not further identified] has been placed under house arrest following his failed attempt to break away from the Iraqi regime. A SAIRI spokesman in Damascus has quoted Iraqi sources as saying that the security forces protecting the palace of the younger son of the Iraqi president [Qusayy] have stormed the house of the Iraqi president's brother to prevent him from escaping to Kurdistan.

Iraq: Tikrit 'Totally Cut Off'; Qusayy Prevents Uncle's Flight

LD2802094596 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0608 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus, 28 Feb — Jamal al-Wakil, secretary general of the Islamic Concord Movement in Iraq [as received], has announced that "the town of Tikrit [Saddam's birthplace] is totally cut off and no Iraqi is allowed in or out without a special authorization from the the town's security directorate."

Al-Wakil told KUNA that the town has been the scene of a major popular insurgency following the slaying of women and children of the al-Majid family by the authorities. He added that President Saddam Husayn's younger son Qusayy has resumed full control of security affairs in the town.

The Iraqi opposition spoke two days ago of fierce battles raging as far as Karkuk province between the pro-al-Majid clans and the clans who support President Saddam and his sons.

Al-Wakil pointed out, however, that "the al-Majid family, particularly the offspring of Hasan, 'Abd-al-Ghafur, and Sulayman [Saddam's cousins], are all are fearful that Saddam might eliminate them all because of their opposition to the killing of their cousin Husayn Kamil in Baghdad last Friday."

Bayan Jabr, the representative of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI] in Damascus, has also told KUNA that "Qusayy put his uncle Watban under house arrest as soon as he discovered that the latter was planning to flee to Kurdistan in northern Iraq."

Jabr added: "Watban was planning to flee to northern Iraq with the help of a Kurdish person, who took part in the smuggling of Iraqi antiquities through Kurdistan. Watban hesitated, however, and his plans were uncovered by Qusayy, who stormed his house and put him under house arrest."

Jabr stated that seven people were involved in the plan, three of whom were Kurds who were going to smuggle him into the liberated part of Kurdistan; the rest were his relatives. Jabr said that the plan was to take Watban and his companions by car to Kurdistan as a first stage. From there, he would contact his brother Barzan who would mastermind his flight from Kurdistan with forged papers. [passage omitted]

Iraq: INC Figure on Qusayy Moves Against Husayn Kamil Supporters

NC2702185296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Dr. Ahmad Shalabi, director of the INC, Executive Bureau, by 'Isam Hasan; place and date not given; from the "News and Reports" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] Dr. Shalabi, how do you see the current conflict among the ruling wings in Iraq? What repercussions can this conflict have on the regime's overall structure?

[Shalabi] It became apparent recently that the regime governs Iraq with gangster methods, not as a government. We have a situation where inter-clan conflicts decide what Saddam Husayn does and how he handles affairs of state. I believe the recent schism within the ruling family, represented by Husayn Kamil's defection in August 1995, has greatly harmed the regime. His subsequent return to Baghdad and Saddam's killing him in a brutal fashion proves again that clan considerations come before any other factors in Iraq. The current clashes in Baghdad and Tikrit follow an attempt by Qusayy, on the orders of his father, Saddam, to eliminate any remaining sympathizers with Husayn Kamil. The special security body and the president's bodyguard are pursuing these people, who still have some weapons and are resisting Qusayy's and the special security body's attempts to arrest and kill them. The regime has lost all its credibility abroad. It is very difficult for some Arab and foreign countries and organizations to defend and help the regime, as some have been trying. The current vacuum in Iraq demonstrates the need for all the opposition factions to unite and work together. An opportunity exists to act against the regime now. We are trying to contact the other parties to coordinate our actions in this regard.

[Hasan] Yes, fine. [Opposition figure] Mash'an al-Juburi has issued a call for a meeting of the Iraqi opposition forces and for Jordanian-Syrian coordination to make arrangements for Iraq's future. What does the INC [Iraqi National Congress] congress think of this invitation?

[Shalabi] We have received no such invitation. But we wish to state that only the Iraqi people should determine Iraq's political future. We are calling for calm coordination among the active parties in Iraq. We are dealing with the facts as they occur and are

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communicating with the active parties to coordinate stances, particularly with the Islamic Movement and the parties in Iraqi Kurdistan.

[Hasan] Thank you, Dr. Shalabi.

Iraq: Opposition Figure—'Conflict Will End in Tyrant's Demise'

NC2702190896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Iraqi opposition figure Major General Hasan al-Naqib by 'Isam Hasan; place and date not given; from the "News and Reports" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] Mr. al-Naqib, there are rumors in Baghdad of security disturbances in the Iraqi capital, particularly a sharp conflict involving ruling wings that has reached the point of physical elimination. Could you please put our listeners in the picture and say what conclusions might be drawn from current events, especially their implications for the safety of the regime itself?

[Al-Naqib] There is certainly no doubt a conflict is going on within the [ruling] family. You know, of course, that some reports are true and some are mere rumors. But what is certain is that a bloody conflict is going on within the family itself. The killing of Husayn Kamil, his brothers, sisters, father, and others proves that there is a conflict. I believe this is the beginning of the family's end. As you know, the government in Iraq is a single family rule, not even a whole clan. The two people who were killed and were buried as heroic martyrs were killed defending Husayn Kamil, not the opposite. The story was told differently to cover up the facts. And women and children were killed. The conflict, therefore, will take its natural course. It is inevitable. I expect this conflict will end in the tyrant's demise.

Iraq: Agriculture Minister Denies Rumor of Saddam's Death

LD2802113196 Paris LCI Television in French 0916 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Marc Berdugo brings a round-up of the gossip.

[Berdugo] Yesterday [27 February] Kuwaiti television spread the rumor that the family of the two generals murdered on Friday [23 February], the al-Majid clan, had taken up arms against Saddam Husayn. To support this theory, the presenter offered the testimony of an opponent of the Iraqi regime who had taken refuge in Damascus:

[Begin recording] [Bayan Jabr, representative in Damascus of the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq] Our organization has learned from completely reliable sources that blood has been shed between the members of the al-Majid clan and people close to Saddam Husayn's son 'Udayy. It happened yesterday inside the presidential palace in Baghdad.

[Berdugo] Did the clan war begin in Iraq? It is impossible to check. However, several sources said yesterday that Saddam Husayn decided finally to undertake to decimate the whole family of the generals who defected. Forty people have reportedly been killed since Friday, among them women and children. Ever wilder rumors suggest that an uncle of the defectors actually saved his own life by cutting off his nephew's head and displaying it to Saddam Husayn as a sign of allegiance.

The latest rumor in official circles is that Saddam Husayn has actually been killed by one of his bodyguards, who is still faithful to the murdered generals. We took all these rumors, went to the Paris agricultural show where an Iraqi minister happened to be present, and asked him the question: Is Saddam Husayn still alive?

[Begin recording] [Unidentified LCI correspondent, in English] Just one thing, lastly, Mr. Salih: There was a rumor — one rumor — about the death of Mr. Saddam Husayn. Is he still alive?

[Iraqi Agriculture Minister 'Abd-al-Ilah Hamid Muhammad Salih, in English; laughing] He is alive, and still alive, and in good health. [end recording]

[Berdugo] So the answer is unequivocal. In Baghdad at least, neither the television nor the daily press took the trouble yesterday to spread the rumor any further.

Iraq: Saddam Grandchildren Said Killed; 'Executions Continue'

MM2802115096 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 28 Feb 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by 'Adnan Husayn: "Iraqi Sources Confirm Saddam's Grandchildren Have Been Killed"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, Baghdad, Dubai, news agencies — Numerous questions remained unanswered yesterday about what is happening in Iraq since the return of the Iraqi president's son-in-law General Husayn Kamil, who has been eliminated along with members of his family. Opposition sources and Iraqi communities abroad circulated information about "eliminations and confrontations" among members of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's family in Baghdad and Tikrit, birthplace of the president and his nephews, who have been eliminated.

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Meanwhile, Kurdish sources in Irbil have confirmed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT information circulating in various Iraqi cities, namely that — in addition to Husayn Kamil, his two brothers, and their father, Kamil Hasan al-Majid — all the sons and daughters of the Iraqi president's sons-in-law, Husayn and Saddam Kamil, have been killed. This information tallies with previous information revealed by Iraqis arriving in the Jordanian capital, Amman, namely that the last week's massacre included the grandchildren of the Iraqi president, whose eldest son, 'Udayy, was quoted as saying that he no longer recognized them [as nephews and nieces], so he killed them for fear of their revenge when they grow up and learn the story of their family, which has been annihilated.

The Kurdish sources added that their information indicates that the elimination of the Iraqi president's sons-in-law and all members of their families took place last Wednesday, that is, one day after the sons-in-law returned from Jordan; one day before the announcement that the Iraqi president's daughters, Raghd and Rana, had been divorced from their husbands; and two days before the announcement of the "clan attack" in which the two sons-in-law were said to have been killed. [passage omitted]

According to the Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation, which is close to the [opposition] Unified Iraqi National Congress, "exchanges of fire" and "fierce fighting" were taking place yesterday morning in the suburb of al-Biya' [as transliterated] south of Baghdad, where the house that the Iraqi Government said last Friday that young men from the al-Majid family had attacked, killing Husayn Kamil and members of his family, is situated. The corporation added that similar clashes were taking place in the village of al-'Awjah in Tikrit (birthplace of the Iraqi president and his murdered sons-in- law) between government forces and Husayn Kamil's supporters.

Hamid al-Bayati, representative of the [opposition] "Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq," has confirmed that these confrontations took place, saying that "45 people have been killed so far, all of whom are relatives or supporters of Husayn Kamil." He added that "executions are continuing against even women and children." [passage omitted]

Iraq: Al-Samarra'i Highlights Jordan's Importance to Opposition

JN2702133496 Amman AL-HADATH in Arabic 28 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i has called for competition between the opposition groups if coordination is not possible. He expects the Iraqi opposition to develop their stands following the killing of General Husayn Kamil.

Al-Samarra'i stressed that the opposition should play a role in extending bridges between Amman, Damascus, Riyadh, and other regional capitals to topple the Iraqi president.

The former chief of the Iraqi Intelligence, who is considered one of the most prominent Iraqi opposition leaders, denied reports of an imminent meeting of Iraqi opposition forces in Damascus. He noted that he did not support such a meeting.

Al-Samarra'i reiterated his concern about maintaining good relations with Amman, noting that it is an important arena for the opposition. He expressed his conviction that Gen. Husayn Kamil was wrong when he deferred with Jordan, adding that this deprived him of power. He said Kamil could not present himself to Riyadh and Damascus in a good way.

Al-Samarra'i defected from Baghdad to Damascus via the northern region in 1992, when he discovered the Iraqi president and his assistants were planning to assassinate him.

Iraq: Opposition Badr Forces Begin Anti-Regime Operations

JN2702160396 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1320 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Fight them, and God will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame, help you to victory over them. [Koranic verse] Having relied on God, believing in the role of the mujahidin in deciding the uncertain and deteriorating situation, and in view of the deteriorating situation of our faithful, oppressed people, the forces of the victorious Badr Army Corps began the series of the Amir of the Faithful operations at 0100, 24 February. In the first phase, the operations targeted the headquarters of the Saddamist Fourth Army Corps, south of al-'Amarah Governorate. A fierce battle raged at night, resulting in very heavy losses among the humiliated ranks. The valiant mujahidin captured large quantities of weapons and ammunition. More details in the following recorded report from the battlefield:

[Begin unidentified correspondent recording] Fight them, and God will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame, help you to victory over them. [Koranic verse] Proceeding from the religious and human responsibility toward fighting the unjust ones, uprooting the remnants of the clique and ruling wounded Iraq,

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and spreading peace and justice among the oppressed; believing in the great role of jihad in toppling the regime of treason, agents, and corruption; and having relied on God Almighty, the heroic mujihidin inside Iraq began the Amir of the Faithful operations, code-named 'Ali Bin-Abi Talib, at 0100 against the first company of the third infantry regiment of Brigade 422 and the engineering effort. The enemy losses were as follows:

1. Five bulldozers were set ablaze.
2. Four armored vehicles were destroyed.
3. One shovel was set ablaze and destroyed. A group of tents were set ablaze, in addition to other losses that could not be counted.

The following spoils were taken:

1. Four 60-mm mortar guns
2. Two DShK machine guns
3. 212 Kalashnikov rifles
4. Three RPG's and one flare gun
5. One [word indistinct]
6. Three [words indistinct]
7. Five tents
8. One sniper rifle
9. Two [word indistinct]
10. One radio set
11. A quantity of ammunition and a number of masks

Meanwhile, the mujahidin returned safely to their base, confident about God's support.

[Signed] The Badr forces command of operations [end recording]

Iraq: Oil Minister Comments on Resuming Exports

JN2702105396 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0955 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 27 Feb (INA) — Oil Minister Engineer Lieutenant General 'Amir Muhammad Rashid today announced that Iraq has received a letter from OPEC stating its willingness to hold its extraordinary conference once Iraq and the United Nations reach an agreement that ensures the rights of oil-producing countries.

At a news conference today, Rashid said Iraq had completed its preparations to resume oil exports, including storage systems, pipelines, ports, waterways, oil tankers, tugboats, and other details. These preparations enable Iraq to export oil it reaches an agreement with the United Nations.

The oil minister added that Iraq's export capacity of crude oil currently stands at 2 million barrels per day via al-Bakr Port on the Arabian Gulf and the Turkish Jihan Port on the Mediterranean.

Rashid said the results of the dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations were positive. The dialogue is constructive and objective, and both sides displayed goodwill to reach an agreement that allows Iraq to export oil in exchange for food and medicine.

The oil minister said Iraq and the United Nations will soon hold a new round of talks to address a few points.

The oil minister said Iraq's leadership, headed by President Saddam Husayn, will, through OPEC unity and the redistribution of quotas in a way that ensures Iraq's market rights, be careful not to cause any disturbances in the oil market.

The oil minister said Iraq recently contacted the current OPEC chairman, the Algerian energy minister, and briefed him on Iraq's oil policy, informing him that Iraq did not want to upset the oil market.

Asked by the INA correspondent about the preparations by the Iraqi and Turkish sides to resume oil exports via the Turkish port of Jihan, on the Mediterranean, the oil minister said that contacts were held between Iraq and Turkey to guarantee the flow of oil via the two pipelines that extend to the Turkish port. He added that there is still strong technical cooperation between the two sides, noting that Iraq's export capacity via the two pipelines that cross Turkish territory stands at 1.1 million barrels per day. Iraq's export capacity via al-Bakr Port, on the Arabian Gulf, is between 1.2 and 1.3. [million] barrels per day.

Answering another question by the INA correspondent on OPEC states' readiness to face Iraq's possible resumption of exports once an agreement between Iraq and the United Nations is reached, the oil minister said: In September 1993, OPEC decided that once Iraq returned to the oil market, OPEC would hold an extraordinary meeting at the ministerial level to discuss the issue. This was reiterated last November in Vienna. OPEC members expressed their readiness to hold such an extraordinary meeting to redistribute the quotas in a way that will not create confusion in the oil market.

On the possibility of increasing Iraq's export capacity of crude oil, the oil minister said the export capacity currently stands at 2 million barrels per day, noting that it could be raised to 2.5 million barrels per day within a few months, after some requirements for oil facilities are furnished. In two years time, Iraq will reach the oil quota set by OPEC, which amounts to more than 3 million barrels per day.

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Rashid pointed out that the Oil Ministry has drawn up ambitious plans for the next five and 10 years to increase production capacity of crude oil by depending on the country's large oil reserve. Iraq has the world's second largest oil reserve. It may have the largest oil reserve within the next few years. Its reserve will total around 1 to 2 million barrels per day of the OPEC ceiling. Iraq is likely to meet the demand for its oil, in view of its large reserve. Iraq has unused, discovered, and undiscovered oil fields.

The oil minister said Iraq is currently holding contacts with 28 international companies, including giant conglomerates, to develop its oil fields under contracts with these companies. He added that Iraq will take into consideration — when it signs any contract — the political stands of the governments of these companies, their attitude toward Iraq under the unjust blockade, and their stands at the Security Council. Iraq will give preferential treatment to companies from friendly countries that have demonstrated positive stands toward Iraq and its people.

The oil minister said that Iraq is keen to implement the oil agreement that was signed recently with Jordan and endorsed by both the Iraqi and Jordanian Governments. He noted that the agreement is being implemented effectively and in a positive spirit. He said that contacts between the two sides have continued, adding that the latest contact was held yesterday between the Jordanian Energy Ministry and the Iraqi Oil Ministry on the practical formulas to perpetuate the implementation of the agreement. He noted that Iraq continues to transport oil, oil products, and gas by truck to sisterly Jordan.

Answering a question on the recent visit to Baghdad by a Palestinian delegation led by the chief of the PLO Political Department and whether the issue of supplying the Palestinian Authority with oil products was discussed, the oil minister said: We have not received any request in this regard. However, Iraq is ready to supply our Palestinian people with oil if they ask.

The oil minister said that once Paragraph 22 of Security Council Resolution 687 — which will allow Iraq to resume its oil exports according to its OPEC quota — is applied, Iraq will be ready to export its whole quota. He added that the ongoing dialogue between Iraq and the UN General Secretariat delegation will allow Iraq to export 2 million barrels per day.

Iraq: Kalmyk President, Delegation Arrive on 2-Day Visit

JN2702164796 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1445 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 27 Feb (INA)— Kyrsan Almichnov, president of the Kalmyk Republic, one of the Russian Federation's republics, and his delegation arrived in Baghdad today on a two-day visit to Iraq.

In a statement to THE IRAQI NEWS AGENCY, the Kalmyk president said that his visit to Iraq falls within the framework of maintaining and bolstering the close relations of friendship and activating cultural cooperation between the two friendly countries.

Iraq: Tariq 'Aziz Meets Visiting Kalmyk President

JN2702164896 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1450 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 27 Feb (INA)— Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz today met with Kyrsan Almichnov, president of the Kalmyk Republic, one of the Russian Federation's republics, and his accompanying delegation.

During the meeting, relations between Iraq and the Russian Federation and the Kalmyk Republic were discussed. The two officials stressed the need to continue to promote these relations in the service of the national interests of the two friendly countries and peoples.

The two sides also stressed the need to swiftly lift the unjust blockade imposed on Iraq so that the fruitful relations of friendship and cooperation between the Russian Federation and Kalmyka on the one hand and Iraq on the other could be resumed.

Discussions during the meeting also dealt with a number of issues of joint interest.

The delegation comprised Kalmyk Deputy Prime Minister Alex Arylov and Sergey Amynov [names as transliterated], adviser to the Kalmyk president.

Iraq: Saddam Receives Kalmyk Republic President

NC2702194896 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1730 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 27 Feb (INA)— President Saddam Husayn has received Kyrsan Almichnov, personal envoy of the Russian leadership, who is also president of the Kalmyk Republic, one of the Russian Federation's republics.

Almichnov conveyed to his excellency the president an oral message from the Russian leadership, expressing

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its interest in restoring vitality to ties of cooperation and mutual interests between Iraq and the Russian Federation.

Almichnov asserted that he came personally to congratulate President Saddam Husayn and to convey congratulations from the people and government of the Republic of Kalmyka on the brilliant results of the referendum on the day of the great march and the absolute loyalty the Iraqi people expressed on that historic day.

He said his visit to Iraq reflects a deep desire to express the Kalmyk Government's and people's solidarity with Iraq under the leadership of President Saddam Husayn. He also expressed the Russian people's sympathy and friendship [word indistinct] linking them to the Iraqi people.

Almichnov said: I was eager to visit Iraq and meet President Saddam Husayn and learn from his wisdom, being a young politician myself. I wanted to reiterate the Republic of Kalmyka's position on the unjust embargo imposed unjustifiably on the patient and struggling people of Iraq.

President Saddam Husayn told his guest that he and the great people of Iraq harbor the same good sentiments and eagerness to develop relations with the Russian Federation. He wished the president of the Republic of Kalmyka everything good.

The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf.

Iraq: Iran Reports Two Ships Bound for Iraq Impounded

LD2602203596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1930 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The navy of the multi-national forces, which is in charge of controlling the economic sanctions against Iraq in the Persian Gulf waters, intercepted two ships on their way to Iraq.

The American spokesman of the multi-national forces said: These ships were carrying tanks and personnel-carrier spare parts for Iraq and were impounded in the Persian Gulf waters.

This is the first time that ships carrying spare parts to Iraq were impounded.

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Israel: Peres Warns 'Arafat of Consequences If Demands Not Met

TA2702155696 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Report by political correspondent Udi Segal]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Unremitting and comprehensive pressure on 'Arafat is the name of the game at the moment. As part of this game, an unofficial message was relayed to Yasir 'Arafat informing him that Israel is considering postponing the Hebron evacuation if he fails to comply with the security-related demands Shim'on Peres is about to convey to him. Another message in this spirit was communicated to 'Arafat by the United States.

Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, who was asked about it today, admitted: There is a linkage between the Palestinian Authority [PA] actions against terror and the future of the political process. Prime Minister Shim'on Peres says: We are committed to the accords and to the date of the Hebron evacuation, but if 'Arafat does not comply with the spirit of the accords, the situation may be reviewed. Political elements note that while such an unofficial message has been relayed, no ultimatum will be issued because the rescheduling of the Hebron redeployment may cause 'Arafat to postpone the amendment of the Palestinian Charter.

Lieutenant General Amnon Shahaq, chief of staff, will meet with 'Arafat tonight and present him with the list of Israeli demands, the foremost being that he immediately disarm Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], outlaw the Hamas military arm, and arrest the Hamas activists who provide murder squads with logistic support. Peres is sending the chief of staff to Gaza in a bid to underscore the professional and operational rather than political nature of the demands. Besides, he has no desire to be photographed in the company of the PA chairman only a few days after the two grave terrorist attacks. [passage omitted]

Israel: More on Shahaq's, Shin Bet Head's 'Tough' Talk With 'Arafat

TA2802065596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night's meeting between Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq and Yasir 'Arafat was tough. The chief of staff demanded that 'Arafat arrest the leaders of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the rejectionist front. The Shin Bet and IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch heads presented a list of fugitives Israel is demanding be detained, and raised possible ways of action jointly to uproot terrorism. Our correspondent Nisim Qeynan was present at the Liaison and Coordination Office at the Erez crossing:

[Begin Qeynan recording] The chief of staff and Shin Bet head conducted a tense and determined meeting with 'Arafat. Shahaq gave 'Arafat a list of the Israeli security services' grave charges against the Palestinian Authority [PA] for not acting with sufficient determination to uproot terrorism. They brought a long list of wanted men and the leaders of the rejectionist front who operate in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank almost unhindered. Among the fugitives is Muhammad Dif, head of Hamas' military arm in the Gaza Strip and a Khan Yunus resident, who has been hunted for four years; and his deputy Fathi al-Satari. 'Arafat and his men noted that they are doing the best they can and referred to the wave of detentions in the past 24 hours in the wake of the two terrorist attacks in Jerusalem and Ashqelon. They said that the Palestinian police have detained some 150 Hamas activists, including 30 from the military arm, and 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam bands. 'Arafat also claimed that according to their information the perpetrators of the two attacks belong to Hamas' military arm on the West Bank and not from the Gaza Strip. Therefore, Palestinian control over them is almost impossible, he said. The Israeli officers stressed to 'Arafat that the terrorist leadership is located in the Gaza Strip and must be rounded up. The chief of staff also gave 'Arafat an unequivocal message from Prime Minister Shim'on Peres that Israel is determined to close the territories for an unlimited period unless it is convinced that the PA is meeting the demands presented at the meeting and shows more resolution in uprooting terrorism. [end recording]

[Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 28 February in a page 1 report by David Makovsky, Bill Hutman, and On Levi adds that Shahaq's message to 'Arafat included "a warning that a failure to meet this demand would have a direct bearing on negotiations and on any future agreements." Shahaq reportedly told 'Arafat that Israel had in the past taken into consideration the PA leader's internal problems, but this would no longer be the case. 'You have public legitimacy and you have the means, and there is no excuse, outside a lack of motivation, not to fight terrorists,' Shahaq told 'Arafat.

["The chief of staff made clear to 'Arafat that if Israel gets the impression that he is not dealing with terror and Hamas, it may launch negotiations with Hamas itself. 'If he can't control (them) let him not demand exclusivity in negotiating with them. Israel will start to negotiate with Hamas and other groups,' senior sources in Jerusalem said."]

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Israel: Peres on Demands of 'Arafat; Shahaq-'Arafat Meeting Ends

TA2702203196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres says 'Arafat must outlaw the terror organizations operating on his territory and disarm their members. Mr. Peres said he explained to 'Arafat that there can be no more than one armed group under his rule and that if he cannot rule in the area handed over to him, there is no point in holding negotiations with him exclusively. Peres said he sent the chief of staff to a meeting with 'Arafat with clear demands regarding what the Palestinian Authority [PA] must do. 'Arafat is being asked to immediately arrest anyone who plans and initiates terrorist activities. Mr. Peres said he does not want to threaten but if 'Arafat fails to abide by the commitments he has undertaken, Israel will have to reconsider many things — among them possibly the evacuation of Hebron. Our correspondent Ron Nesi'el reports that the prime minister made these remarks during a meeting in his office with members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

The two-and-a-half hour meeting between Chief of Staff Shahaq and Yasir 'Arafat at the Erez checkpoint has just ended. Lieutenant General Shahaq submitted to 'Arafat a detailed list of Israel's security demands. He heard a preliminary report from PA officials regarding the detentions carried out over the last two days. Our correspondent Nisim Qeynan reports that Shahaq brought with him a long list of wanted persons and leaders of the rejectionist organizations who operate in the PA areas.

Israel: Shahaq—'War To the Bitter End' Against 'Terrorism'

TA2702121496 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 27 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Hila Qomem]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "There is only one way to fight Palestinian terrorism: An ongoing war without compromise or compassion. Nothing will weaken our war to the bitter end against those involved in terrorism. That is being done and will continue to be done," Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq told a news conference at Hadassah-'En Kerem Hospital yesterday. "We must hurt the economic and military infrastructure and all those who aid terrorism. There is a whole group of people working with the terrorists," the chief of staff said. [passage omitted]

Shahaq was asked whether a security fence between Qalqilyah and Tulkarm can prevent attacks and said that the idea that a 10 to 12 km fence will solve the problem of terrorism indicates either naivete or lack of understanding.

The chief of staff stressed that the key to dealing with terrorism is effective intelligence. In response to the question of whether he is referring to activity outside Israel's border, he said: "In the war against terrorism there are no borders. Those who have to defend themselves, have to reach the terrorists wherever they are."

He said that after the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] evacuation of West Bank towns, it is the duty of the Palestinian Authority to destroy the terrorist infrastructure. "It either carries out its undertaking or it is irresponsible," Shahaq said.

When asked whether he was not mistaken when he opposed the continuation of the closure while others supported it, Shahaq replied; "There were casualties, therefore it would have been better to have had the closure, but I do not know if a closure would have prevented the attack. Last Wednesday [21 February], the prime minister decided to lift the closure and none of the defense elements opposed the move. Even if somebody opposed it, he could have expressed his opposition between Wednesday and Friday when the closure was actually lifted, so I assume that there was no opposition."

Shahaq said that on Saturday night a new intelligence warning was received about the possibility of a car bomb attack from the Gaza Strip. In the long run, it was a false warning. The warning was evaluated on Saturday night by various elements and recommendations were made. Shahaq said that no element, including the Shin Bet, recommended imposing a closure on Judaea and Samaria, only the Gaza Strip.

Shahaq noted that there is a link between the Jerusalem and Ashqelon attacks, although it has not been proven. He said that the fact that a single element took responsibility for both attacks, the short time space between the two events, and the similarity in the composition of the explosives, support the theory that there was a link between the two.

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Israel: Senior PA Officials Barred From Entering Israel

TA2702132896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This afternoon, it was reported that in the wake of the closure, Israel is barring senior Palestinian Authority [PA] officials from entering Israel.

Israel: Committee Approves Separation Plan From PA

TA2802112596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal said that the Ministerial Committee on Security has in fact approved the separation plan between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and Israel. He said that the plan will go into effect immediately and that the redeployment will last two years. Jerusalem will receive an additional 500 policemen. Seven Border Police companies and technical measures will patrol the dividing line. Movement between the PA and Israel will be carried out only at official crossings and anybody trying to cross elsewhere will be shot on the assumption that his motive was to carry out a terrorist attack. As to the decision to set up a command to assure safety in bus travel, it is in fact a plan presented by Yig'al Pressler, the prime minister's counterterrorism adviser. The plan proposes recruiting about 1,000 students, veterans of combat units, to safeguard certain bus routes.

Israel: Peres—Special Command for Safety on Buses Set Up

TA2802092296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said that the Ministerial Committee on Security Affairs has decided to set up a special command for bus travel safety, one of the decisions taken after the 25 February terrorist attacks. It was also decided to continue the closure on the territories, to increase urgently the police presence in Jerusalem, and to bolster security along the dividing line. Another decision mentioned by the prime minister was to make a resolute demand from the Palestinian Authority to take responsibility for the existence of a single armed authority within its territory. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that the prime minister reported on the committee's decisions to the Labor Knesset faction.

Israel: IDF Document Proposes Civilian Sanctions on PA

TA2702121996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A document drafted by the Central Command proposes cutting off water, electricity, and telephone links to the inhabitants of the territories and imposing a general closure on the West Bank if the Palestinian Authority [PA] does not extradite terrorists and does not fight the terrorist infrastructure. Yoni Ben-Menahem reports:

[Ben-Menahem] The document was written by Colonel Sha'ul, an aide to Major General Ilan Biran on Spectrum B. The six-page document is headlined: Levers Against the Palestinians: Violations, Sanctions, and the Authority To Impose Them. It was written two months ago and copies were sent to the heads of the Planning and Intelligence Branches; Maj. Gen. Oren Shahor, coordinator of activities in the territories; the Shin Bet, and others. The document deals with a series of possible Palestinian violations of agreements and the sanctions the defense establishment should impose on the Palestinians in response. The violations start with relatively minor deviations by the Palestinian Police in carrying out detentions contrary to the agreement, up to the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state before the negotiations on the permanent settlement are concluded. One of the scenarios in the document studies the possibility that the PA will provide sanctuary to terrorists, will not extradite them, and does not act against the terrorist organizations' infrastructure. The document suggests responding by clamping a general closure on Judaea and Samaria as well as imposing a series of sanctions in civilian areas, such as stopping the supply of water, electricity, telephone, and postal services from Israel, and ceasing hospitalization and medical services in Israel. The document also says that Israel should prevent the Palestinians from developing independent infrastructures. Another scenario is operational cooperation between the PA and the terrorist organizations. If that happens, the document suggests halting further redeployment, in the words of the agreement. Central Command sources say that the command exerted pressure in several cases to implement the policy, but faced opposition by the Foreign Ministry and Maj. Gen. Shahor's office. Defense sources said in response that Gen. Shahor never received a proposal from senior military elements to impose the sanctions detailed in the document and that the document did not come up in senior forums. But what is preventing the implementation of the recommendations now in view of the fact that the PA is not extraditing terrorists and is not fighting the terrorist infrastructure?

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Israel: Israeli Arab Groups Denounce Bomb Attacks

TA2602132896 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 26 Feb 96 p 4

[Report by David Rudge]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] "The Israeli Islamic Movement is to redouble its mediation efforts between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and heads of Islamic groups in Gaza and the West Bank in a bid to reach an agreement that would end the cycle of violence," spokesman Ibrahim Sarsur said yesterday.

He said the movement's spiritual leader Shaykh 'Abdallah Nimr Darwish has been working very hard in this area and would continue his efforts.

"We have no direct relations with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] or any Islamists in any areas, but we have been doing a lot to try and bring those Islamists in the Gaza Strip and occupied West Bank to come to an agreement with the PA and also the Israelis concerning such violent acts," said Sarsur. We want this region to be out of this cycle of violence. Shaykh 'Abdallah has succeeded in doing a lot concerning this vital issue.

"Unfortunately, what happened yesterday morning shows that a lot more has to be done to bring all sides to cease, not only tactically, but strategically, all these violent actions.

"Shaykh 'Abdallah insists on continuing these efforts, which he has not stopped. He is in direct contact with Israeli government and PA officials and leaders of Islamic movements in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank." Sarsur reiterated the Islamic Movement's total condemnation of the suicide bomb attacks.

"It is very difficult to express our agony and sorrow over what has happened in these violent actions against innocent people," he said. "We have condemned such actions in the past and we condemn them now and will continue in the future to denounce all these violent, terrorist actions."

The forum of Israeli Arab Council heads also issued a statement denouncing the attacks and calling on the PA to crack down with an "iron fist" against the perpetrators and those behind them.

"We completely condemn the attacks in Jerusalem and Ashqelon in which innocent people were killed," said Husayn Sulayman, spokesman for the forum.

"We don't just condemn these attacks, we abhor these murderers who are trying to destroy all the understandings that have been reached between Israel and the Palestinians. We send our deep condolences to the families of the victims and wish all those injured a speedy and full recovery."

Israel: 'Final' Police Decision—French Hill Attack 'Terrorist'

TA2702164896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Telphone conversation between Aviv Bushinsky, police affairs correspondent and announcer David Ze'ev — live]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Ze'ev] On the line with me now is Aviv Bushinsky, Qol Yisra'el's reporter, on the French Hill incident yesterday. Aviv, what is the finding of the police at this stage?

[Bushinsky] Now the final decision: It was a terrorist thing made on purpose, an initiative by one man, an Arab guy, that hit 23 people and killed one woman. The final test was today, this morning. The police people checked the brake, the car's brake, and decided that there was no mechanical failure. Therefore, with all the other intelligence information, they got to the conclusion that it was on purpose.

[Ze'ev] It was on purpose. Did they find any documents in the car indicating that the driver had set out on this terrorist attack?

[Bushinsky] Yes, as a matter of fact they even found it yesterday, a sort of document signed by the Islamic Jihad. Even though it doesn't say any specific thing, as if he was sent by anyone, but this information, gathered by the fact that the driver met one of the East Jerusalem newspaper editors and told him: I am going to do something tonight; you will see me on television. And then he said: Everything is under Allah's oath. Therefore, all this information gathered concluded that it was on purpose and not another car accident. I must say that yesterday the police thought that it's a terrorist attack, but then the experts in driving saw all kinds of signs or marks on the road and they said maybe it is a mechanical problem, but this fact is not valid anymore.

[Ze'ev] Is there any suspicion that he did have accomplices or did he act alone? Was he sent by any organization?

[Bushinsky] The assumption is that he acted alone. It's a guy who was a drug addict. He is 39 years old. He is an Arab. He came from the States. He has a California driving license, and he probably decided to be more religious. He said Allah promised me to do this mission, and that is what he did.

[Ze'ev] Aviv Bushinsky, thank you very much indeed.

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Israel: Shahaq Says Hamas Preparing 'Secret' Arm To Pursue Attacks

TA2702170996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] chief of staff, Lieutenant General Amnon Shahaq, says Israel has received information that both Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad intend to continue carrying out terrorist attacks. The army chief also told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that Hamas would go on with the violence even it reached an agreement with the Palestinian Authority to stop terrorist activity. Our correspondent Alan Ben-'Ami reports:

[Begin Ben-'Ami recording] The IDF chief of staff says Hamas has prepared or is preparing an arm or a secret group for the possibility that even if it reaches an agreement with the Palestinian Authority on halting terrorism, such activity could nevertheless continue. Lieutenant General Amnon Lipkin-Shahaq was quoted by a Knesset official at the closed-door meeting of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

A senior intelligence officer is said to have told the committee that so far, 50-100 Hamas activists have been arrested in the roundups since Sunday's [25 February] violence. Most of the arrests have taken place in the Gaza Strip, but there is no indication, he said, that senior people have been taken in by the Palestinian Authority. The senior Israeli officer said Yasir 'Arafat could strike a more serious blow but that there is a wide range of interests which are influencing him not to do so.

For his part, the chief of staff said a closure is imposed in the territories only when there is general information on a potential attack. When there is a specific warning, the general said, it must be dealt with. When there is no closure, he maintained, the number of people crossing over illegally is similar to the number of those with permits. When there is a closure, he charged, Israeli employers help to violate it. In these latest attacks, there was no sophistication involved, and there is no new generation of terrorists. All you need are the detonator, the explosive material, and the scum ready to kill themselves. Still, our serious problem is how to confront these suicide attackers. It is very difficult to fight against this phenomenon. Gen. Shahaq said: Based on our information, Hamas will continue to carry out attacks, and Islamic Jihad as well is highly motivated to go on with the violence. [end recording]

Israel: UN's Larsen Says Long Closure Strangles Palestinian Economy

TA2802060896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The UN special envoy to the Palestinian Authority warns that prolonged Israeli closure of the West Bank and Gaza is not in the interests of peace nor the Israeli Government. Speaking yesterday to reporters, Terje Larsen, the UN coordinator of international aid to Palestinians, said long-term closures would strangle the Palestinian economy and lead to a very sharp decline in living conditions, which would produce a breeding ground for violence and extremism. Larsen said that unemployment and underemployment in the Gaza Strip is over 60 percent, and that on full closure days the loss of wages for Palestinian workers is $3 million a day.

Israel: Deliberations on Memo of Understanding With U.S. Begin

TA2702145496 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 25 Feb 96 p 14

[Report by Ben Kaspit]

[FBIS Translated Text] Uri Savir, head of the Israeli peace talks team, will meet with Walid al-Mu'allim, his Syrian counterpart, even before the start of the deliberations between the two delegations at Wye Plantation in Maryland. The talks are scheduled to start on 28 February, but it was learned that Savir and al-Mu'allim will meet earlier in Washington in order to agree on the agenda and the timetable for the current round of talks.

The Israeli delegation to the talks, led by Savir, left for Washington yesterday. Major General Sha'ul Mufaz, who is replacing Maj. Gen. 'Uzi Dayan on the negotiations team, will join the delegation this time. The two generals, Mufaz and Dayan, will "overlap" during the two current rounds. The delegation also includes Foreign Ministry legal adviser Yo'el Singer and Israeli Ambassador to Washington Itamar Rabinovich.

Jerusalem believes the talks will focus primarily on the security arrangements and expects no significant breakthrough or crisis. "The goal," a Jerusalem political source said, "is to get through the months left until the elections in relative peace and quiet, without harming the negotiations."

At the same time, deliberations recently began in Israel on the memorandum of understanding slated to be signed between Israel and the United States alongside a potential peace agreement between Israel and Syria. Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, who is handling the issue on the government's behalf, entrusted Defense Ministry

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Director General David 'Ivri and Foreign Ministry Legal Advisor General Uri Savir with collecting the pertinent material and submitting draft proposals regarding the memorandum of understanding, which is defined as "only one step short of a strategic defense pact between Israel and the United States."

Savir will discuss the matter with U.S. peace coordinator Dennis Ross. Israel aspires to anchor in writing a U.S. commitment regarding aid, especially in intelligence matters, which will complement the "security arrangements package" Israel wants as a condition for withdrawing from the Golan Heights.

Israel: Shahaq on Warning Stations; Low Expectations for Wye Talks

TA2502114196 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 25 Feb 96 p A1

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] "The problem with Israel and Syria is that there is no trust between the parties," Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq said last week. According to him, "Israel will require early warning stations for several years, and the one on Mount Hermon is very essential in this respect" even within the framework of a future peace arrangement with Israel, Lieutenant General Shahaq said.

Shahaq made the remarks in a conversation with Senator John Kyle, member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, who visited Israel last week. Kyle asked the chief of staff who will monitor the Syrian side after Israel withdraws from the Golan, and Shahaq said: "In certain cases, only Israel could handle this."

Shahaq added that "there is a need for a significant cutback in the Syrian military forces" currently deployed between the Golan Heights and Damascus. "We will have to find an answer to the Syrian presence in Lebanon. Some say that Syria fears that after it signs an agreement with Israel, the Arab League will demand that Syria leave Lebanon."

Senator Kyle met with the top Israelis political and security echelons, and the negotiations with Syria were the focus of his discussions here. He told Israeli peace talks coordinator Uri Savir that "Israel should not be surprised if Congress gives a negative answer when discussing the question of aid to Syria."

Prime Minister Shim'on Peres told the senator that the United States alone will not be burdened by the economic aspect of the agreement with Syria. "Peace in the region will not be financed only by the U.S. taxpayer. A NATO-like alliance with European countries will be established to support water, energy, and tourism projects," he said.

The impression in the Foreign Ministry is that Kyle's visit to Israel strengthened his opposition to stationing U.S. soldiers on the Golan and his view that, even if the force is dubbed a "symbolic presence" or an "observers team," its members will be exposed to attacks by terror organizations.

It is believed in the Foreign Ministry that the senator is under the influence of his aide Douglas Faith who, in conversations with his Israeli hosts, often criticized the agreements with the Palestinian Authority and the idea of placing U.S. observers on the Golan.

The issues of early warning, the thinning out of forces, and demilitarization will be at the center of the talks between Israel and Syria, which will start on 28 February at Wye Plantation in Maryland. The talks will focus on security arrangements, and the parties will continue formalizing the general concepts of thinning out forces, early warning, and demilitarization in a future peace agreement.

The Israeli delegation left for Washington last night. In a discussion the envoys had with Peres on 22 February in preparation for the talks, it was said that no breakthrough is expected and that the talks will be held with a low profile, in view of the upcoming Israeli elections. At the same time, it has been said that it is important to continue the talks within the set framework.

The 17-men delegation, headed by Savir, will return to Israel in two weeks. The delegations will discuss ways to continue the negotiations until the Israeli elections on 29 May.

Israel: Peres' Bureau Denies 4-Way Cairo Summit in April

TA2702122096 Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew 27 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by ITIM correspondent Uri Qatzir]

[FBIS Translated Text] An ITIM correspondent has learned that a Middle East summit with the participation of the leaders of Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority is expected to be held before the upcoming Knesset election.

The summit will most probably be held in Cairo, although there is as yet no final decision on the venue. A similar summit was held in Cairo in February 1995.

The summit will deal with issues pertaining to the implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian interim arrangement and the talks on the permanent arrangement scheduled to begin in May.

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The summit will probably be held in early April, but no final decision has yet been made about the date.

[A report by Aluf Ben on page A3 of Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 27 February adds: "Sources in the Prime Minister's Bureau said last night that Peres had not been invited to the summit. Staffers denied reports about a Mubarak-Husayn-'Arafat-Peres summit meeting scheduled for April."]

Israel: Four Options for Charter Amendment Submitted to PA

TA2802081996 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 28 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Steve Rodan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel has submitted to Palestinian Authority [PA] President Yasir 'Arafat four ways to change the Palestinian Covenant, government officials said yesterday.

The methods, included in a document drafted by the Foreign Ministry, state a preferred option, officials said, but they refused to list which is that option.

Among the options are:

— Removal of all clauses in the Palestinian Covenant calling for the destruction of Israel. Officials said this is the most difficult path for 'Arafat, as it would mean eliminating up to 30 of the 33 clauses in the covenant. Officials are least optimistic about the prospects of such a scenario.

— Adoption of a new covenant that would not call for the destruction of Israel. This is also regarded as problematic because it might spell out hard-line Palestinian positions regarding Jerusalem and refugees, which are final status issues Israel and the PLO are to discuss in May.

— A resolution by the Palestine National Council [PNC] that anything in the covenant that contradicts the Israel-PLO accords would be regarded as void.

"This is the preferred solution," said Foreign Ministry legal adviser Daniyel Taub in an address to the Christian Zionist Congress meeting in Jerusalem.

Taub, who listed the above three options, later told THE JERUSALEM POST that his personal preference is for the PNC to adopt an addition to the covenant that would declare null all references to Israel's destruction.

A Foreign Ministry official confirmed the three options listed and said there is a fourth method, but he refused to list it or say whether Israel has settled on a preferred method.

"This document is operative, and listing our preferences could torpedo the entire effort," the official said.

Officials said amending the Palestinian Covenant is no longer solely an Israeli or Palestinian issue. They said the US and the donor nations are involved in formulating the approach and resulting document that would no longer call into question Palestinian recognition of Israel's right to exist. [sentence as published]

Under the Oslo II agreement signed last September, the PLO issued a commitment to change the covenant within two months [of] the inauguration of the new council. Israeli leaders have repeatedly said they will not enter final status talks with the PLO until the covenant is changed.

Privately, senior officials said persuading the PNC to muster the two-thirds majority necessary to change the covenant might be hampered by the indefinite closure of the territories and the decision by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres to halt contacts with the PA. The officials said they have worked hard for the past few weeks to create an atmosphere of goodwill that would help convince the council.

The most significant move, they said, was the decision to allow hundreds of PNC members, including some of the most notorious terrorists of the 1970s and 1980s, to return to the territories to attend the meeting that would propose a change in the covenant.

Israel: Netanyahu on Continuation of Negotiations With PA

TA2802102196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu said that a government under him would negotiate with the Palestinian Authority but would demand that it comply with its undertakings, including the destruction of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] infrastructure and the annulment of the Palestinian Charter. Netanyahu also said that he would continue negotiating with caution while fortifying Israel's defenses and its interests. Our correspondent Yaron Deqel reports that Netanyahu made the remarks to a Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations delegation that is visiting Israel.

Israel: Agreement in Principle Reached on Levi's Return to Likud

TA2702162696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An agreement in principle has been reached regarding David Levi's joining the Likud

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list for the next Knesset elections. This was learned by our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel. Despite this agreement in principle, it has still not been decided whether Levi's movement will receive six or seven slots above the 40th place on the Likud list. Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu wants to reduce the number of Tzomet slots on the list to six so that Levi will agree to an equal number of slots, but Knesset Member [MK] Refa'el Eytan told our correspondent he opposes this initiative. The agreement in principle was reached through the mediation of MK Ari'el Sharon.

Israel: Attorneys Claim 'Amir Did Not Commit Premeditated Murder

TA2602120496 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 26 Feb 96 p 29

[Report by Yoram Yarqoni]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yig'al 'Amir's attorneys yesterday informed the Tel Aviv District Court that their line of defense will be based on the claim that Yig'al 'Amir was not in a normal mental state when he committed the murder and therefore should be charged with reduced criminal responsibility.

The attorneys claim that 'Amir was not in such a mental frame of mind that he could be charged with premeditated murder. The attorneys do not intend to claim that 'Amir is insane. They hope that the results of the psychiatric evaluations carried out on 'Amir will support their claim. The results have still not been submitted to the court. The concept of reduced responsibility in murder cases has been included in a new amendment to the penal law. [passage omitted]

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Jordan: King Husayn Voices Fears That Saddam Killed Grandchildren

MS2802102596 London INDEPENDENT in English 28 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Michael Sheridan, including remarks by King Husayn of Jordan, in London, 27 Feb: "King Fears Saddam Killed Grandchildren"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London — King Husayn of Jordan said yesterday that several children in the families of the two Iraqi defectors who were killed last Friday may have been murdered. If confirmed this would suggest that President Husayn has ordered the murder of his own grandchildren.

The King said in London last night that if he had had any notion of what awaited the defectors "I would have tried to dissuade them from leaving."

Speaking to a Royal Institute of International Affairs, he said the late Lt. General Husayn Kamil and his brother Saddam Kamil had been "honoured guests" until they returned to Baghdad. "When he came out I personally was exposed to the stark reality of Iraq as never before," King Husayn said in a sombre voice.

"He received assurances that he could go back. He put together his family. The horror of it all is that he, his brother, his father who had remained in Iraq, and others have been murdered. Worse still, reports, not yet verified, are that many of the children have been murdered as well," the King said.

Husayn Kamil and President Saddam's daughter Raghad, had four children while Saddam Kamil and Rana had three. President Saddam's motive for having the children murdered could be to ensure that offspring of his treacherous sons-in-law did not become contenders to succeed him, or even as a punishment to his daughters, if he did not believe their stories that they were duped into fleeing Iraq with their husbands.

King Husayn said nobody had the right to interfere in the internal affairs of other states. "But when conditions reach the level they have reached in Iraq... it becomes our duty, all of us, to do what we can... for the Iraqi people."

King Husayn said he had no personal or dynastic ambitions regarding Iraq. But he warned of danger to Iraq's territorial integrity and stability posed by other powerful neighbouring countries.

Jordan: Al-Mu'ashshir Discusses Iraq, Prisoners, Other Issues

JN2702205596 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 27 Feb 96

[News conference by Jordanian Information Minister Dr. Marwan al- Mu'ashshir with unidentified correspondents following a cabinet session in Amman on 27 February—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Al-Mu'ashshir] In its session today, the cabinet decided to hold the al-Balqa' Governorate's by-elections on 15 April to fill a vacant seat after the passing away of late deputy Ibrahim Shihdah.

As was announced yesterday, an office for investors' complaints will be established at the Prime Ministry. Complaints will be received by the director of the Prime Minister's Office. As you know, this director is adviser Salim Khayr. This actually reflects the importance his excellency the prime minister attaches to the issue of investment and to the direct reception of investors' complaints by the Prime Minister's office. [passage omitted]

The cabinet also discussed the policy statement which was endorsed in its final formula. This statement will be presented to the House of Representatives tomorrow. I believe that in light of this statement, the House of Representatives will say its word. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Regarding the Jordanian prisoners in other states such as Iraq and Kuwait, have contacts been held on them? The second question is related to the recent statements on the situation in Iraq. Does Jordan intend to move on the Arab level and hold contacts in order to effect an Arab position on the situation in Iraq?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] Concerning the first question, as I said before, efforts are still being made regarding Jordanians detained in all states and not only in Israel. However, there is a group of Jordanian detainees in Israel on which negotiations have ended. Discussions are still under way on the Jordanians detained in other states.

The reports coming from Iraq are disturbing and show that the way to settle accounts [in Iraq] is still a bloody way. However, I do not want to go into details before we verify the information, so these reports would not be mere rumors. The reports received so far are absolutely disturbing.

[Correspondent] Media circles, or let us say, the Israeli media, have announced that Iraq will create security issues inside Jordan like what happened with [words indistinct]....

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[Al-Mu'ashshir, interrupting] We cannot depend on rumors. There are no developments in this security issue. However, Jordan naturally takes all appropriate precautions to preserve its security.

[Correspondent] Why was the tripartite summit postponed? Did the recent events play any role in this postponement?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] The tripartite summit was not postponed. No date was actually set for it. The date reported by the media was actually based on press reports and not on official reports. As I said in the previous briefing, a date for this summit will be set first when there is time for it in the agenda of the heads of state participating in it. As you know, his majesty the king is now outside the country for a certain period of time. Hence, it depends on finding an appropriate time for the summit. The summit was not postponed, and a date was not actually set for it.

[Correspondent] The Iraqi issue and its developments are still enjoying the interest of most media. My question is: How true are the reports carried by some media to the effect that the Jordanian ambassador in Iraq was subjected to harassment? Another question is about the agreements recently concluded with Israel. These agreements were to be activated on about 15 February, but they have not yet been activated. Are there any reasons for this postponement?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] We explained to the Iraqi ambassador that Jordan cannot at all permit any harassment of any of the Jordanian Embassy staff. His excellency the prime minister was very clear in this regard when he received the Iraqi ambassador. As for the agreements....

[Correspondent, interrupting] You did not answer my first question in detail. Were there any [words indistinct]....

[Al-Mu'ashshir, interrupting] Wait a moment, sir. As for the Jordanian agreements with Israel, they are passing through their constitutional phases, and these documents should be exchanged with the Israeli side. This will take place soon.

[Correspondent] In his recent visit to his excellency the prime minister, Dr. Nabil Sha'th said that in the tripartite summit the bilateral committees will be activated and that the ministerial committee will be named. Will this be awaited, or will there be a Jordanian-Palestinian move in this regard?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] It was actually agreed with the Palestinian side to first hold bilateral Jordanian-Palestinian meetings to discuss all regional projects related to Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority. These bilateral meetings will be held prior to the tripartite meeting. Thank you very much.

Jordan: Al-Mu'ashshir Refuses Comment on Rumored Tariq 'Aziz Arrest

JN2802113296 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 28 Feb 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by Caroline Faraj; special to the JORDAN TIMES]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] In reply to another question about the situation in Iraq, he said reports showed that "accounts are still settled in bloody methods, but I do not want to go into details before verifying information."

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said there was still no immediate, organised effort to stop what was happening in Iraq, stressing that Jordan cannot rely on information by the media, "not even those saying that Iraq might carry out some actions that might undermine security in Jordan."

He denied that a tripartite summit to be attended by His Majesty King Husayn, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat had been postponed and said no date has been set for it yet.

He told reporters the summit will be preceded by Jordanian- Palestinian meetings to discuss regional projects related to Jordan and the Palestinian self-rule areas.

The minister said Jordan agreed to host Iraqi opposition groups because "their goals are political and not military," stressing that Jordan had nothing to do with the role of these offices or their plans to topple Iraqi President Saddam Husayn. "This is a purely internal Iraqi affair," he emphasised.

He said he cannot deny nor confirm news saying Iraqi Deputy Foreign minister Tariq 'Aziz was arrested because the government was not sure of their credibility.

In reply to a question on whether the Jordanian ambassador in Baghdad was harassed by the authorities, he said Jordan will not allow harassment of any member of the staff at the embassy in the Iraqi capital.

Jordan: Israel To Free First Group of Jordanian Prisoners 29 Feb

JN2702200496 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] The [Jordanian] Government announced the release of six Jordanians detained in

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Israel. Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said that this group, which is the first of three groups, will be released on Thursday [29 February].

[Begin al-Mu'ashshir recording] I would like to announce today that the Jordanian Government concluded negotiations on the first group of Jordanian prisoners in Israel. This group, consisting of six prisoners, will be released at 0900 on Thursday, 29 February 1996. These prisoners will be handed over via the King Husayn Bridge.

I would like to announce their names. They are: 'Uthman 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Uthman, 'Ali Mahmud Riyad, Kamil Muhammad 'Ishshah, Jihad Fawwaz Sharif al-Safadi, Riyad Muhammad 'Atiyah Samlut, and Muhammad 'Abd-al-Hamid 'Umar al-Julani. This is the first group, and it will be released on Thursday.

Another group of prisoners, ranging between seven and 10 prisoners, is expected to be released in the next two weeks. [end recording]

Jordan: King Husayn Receives Reply Cable From Kuwaiti Amir

JN2702172296 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn received a cable from His Highness Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, amir of the State of Kuwait, in reply to the cable his majesty sent to his highness on the 35th National Day of fraternal Kuwait.

Following is the text of the cable: Your Majesty brother Husayn Bin-Talal, king of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Amman:

On behalf of Kuwait and in my own name, I thank Your Majesty and the sisterly Jordanian people for your congratulations on our National Day. I appreciate your kind sentiments, and I pray to God to give you continued good health and grant your fraternal country and people the grace of prosperity.

[Signed] Your brother, Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, amir of the State of Kuwait

Jordan: Regent Sends Congratulations to Saudi King Fahd

JN2702173296 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the regent, sent a cable of congratulations to King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques and king of Saudi Arabia, on the 14th anniversary of his assumption of power. Following is the text of the cable:

Brother King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques and king of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, may peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you.

While the people of the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are celebrating the 14th anniversary of your majesty's assumption of power in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it pleases me to send your majesty, in my own name and on behalf of the people and government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, our warmest heartfelt congratulations and sincerest fraternal sentiments, coupled with our prayers to Almighty God to return this occasion as you enjoy continued good health and as the sisterly Saudi people continue their good march toward further progress and prosperity under your wise leadership.

[Signed] Your brother, Hasan Bin-Talal, regent and crown prince

Jordan: House Statement Comments on Vote of Confidence Date

JN2702201796 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The House of Representatives today expressed hope that the government's policy statement, which will be presented to the House tomorrow, will meet the aspirations of the House members as part of the commitment to serving the national interests on various levels.

In a statement issued today, the House stressed its determination to address this constitutional phase, represented by debating the government's policy statement and having a vote of confidence in the government.

The statement pointed out that it is not possible to set a date for a vote of confidence in the government because every House member will be given an opportunity to debate the policy statement. This debate can take place over two or three days as of Saturday. Saturday is not an official date, taking into account the progress of debate. This debate will set an official date for the vote of confidence, the statement added.

Jordan Television will carry the government's policy statement after 1000 [0800 GMT] tomorrow.

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Lebanon: Buwayz Says U.S. Ban on Travel 'Unjustified'

NC2702204196 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has remarked that the development and progress achieved in the security field in Lebanon makes the U.S. Administration's decision to renew the ban on travel to Lebanon unjustified. If the reasons for that decision are not security linked, that is, if they are political and linked with the issue of negotiations, then no political pressure can affect the Lebanese position.

Returning to Beirut from Spain tonight, Minister Buwayz said the explosion in Jerusalem might affect the Israeli elections and, accordingly, lead to a failure to step up negotiations to achieve basic progress.

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Affirms 'Demonstrations Are Banned'

NC2702180896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers ended at 1315 after an exhaustive examination of current issues in the labor, educational, and economic fields.

After the meeting, chaired by President Ilyas al-Hirawi in the Republican Palace in Ba'abda, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri made a statement that the cabinet reviewed the demands submitted in the social and educational fields in addition to economic and media issues.

He pointed out that the Council of Ministers approved some demands and deferred a decision on others until the ad hoc committees examine them and refer their decision to the Council of Ministers. The most important such demand has to do with the rents law and public vehicle drivers.

As for permitting demonstrations—the central demand of the General Labor Federation—Prime Minister al-Hariri reiterated his rejection of this demand and the decree banning demonstrations.

We will enforce the law everywhere, because the Lebanese have paid dear, al-Hariri said, adding: We will not tolerate anarchy. The government has no intention of resigning. We will let no one disturb the order on the streets.

Al-Hariri added: No one will be allowed to turn back the clock. We will allow no setback. We did not ban strikes, but demonstrations are banned, he said.

Al-Hariri called for maintaining stability and stressed the need for dialogue and discussion, noting his approval of social demands.

Al-Hariri pointed out that the Council of Ministers agreed to a proposal by the minister of education calling for recognizing teachers' privileges, which were endorsed at a meeting between al- Hariri and teachers. He remarked that it is natural to approve these demands because the State views the issue positively.

Prime Minister al-Hariri added that the delay in implementing the agreement with teachers does not imply a retraction. The State cannot amend the rents law unless a draft bill is submitted, he said, adding that the minister of justice has been entrusted to submit a proposal to extend the validity of the law until the end of 1996.

Al-Hariri said he hoped the social and economic council will be established soon.

As for the enforcement of the media law, the prime minister pointed out that it has been decided to open an office at the Ministry of Information to examine all data concerning the status of workers in the media field.

Lebanon: GLF Vows To Challenge Government on Demonstrations

NC2802125196 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1225 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sources of the General Labor Federation [GLF] have told our radio that the GLF has decided to abide by its decision to stage demonstrations and strike, despite the cabinet's decisions and in retaliation for [Prime Minister Rafiq] al-Hariri's stubbornness.

Lebanon: Army Units Deployed To Prevent Demonstrations

NC2802065796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Army units have been deployed in the capital and suburbs. The army set up roadblocks and instituted patrols to safeguard public interest and security, in accordance with the decision adopted during the extraordinary meeting of the council of ministers yesterday. A decree was issued in this regard.

The army command announced that all arms permits have been suspended. This step involves all citizens, including those escorting officials and public figures, and will go into effect this afternoon. [passage omitted]

The council of ministers under Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri yesterday rejected the request of the General Labor Federation [GLF] to stage demonstrations. Interior Minister Michel al-Murr has conveyed the rejection

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to the GLF. However, the GLF rejected the decisions made by the council of ministers and insisted on staging demonstrations and strikes.

Lebanon: Army Deployed 'Without Any Incidents Worth Mentioning'

NC2802122396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In implementation of the cabinet's decision authorizing the Lebanese army to maintain order in all areas of its deployment, army units at dawn today were deployed in Ba'lkabakk and other towns in al-Biqa' without any incidents worth mentioning.

In 'Alayh, the army set up fixed and mobile checkpoints at entrances to villages and on junctions. Citizens were subjected to intensive checks. Elsewhere, army units erected roadblocks in al-Batrun to safeguard security and facilitate the citizens' business activities. Meanwhile, army units were deployed in public squares in Sidon and on all roads leading to the town. Other army units set up checkpoints in Tyre and its suburbs. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: IRNA Reports Mass Arrests by Israel, SLA in South

LD2702133696 Tehran IRNA in English 1246 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] South Lebanon, Feb. 27, IRNA — The Zionist forces and the militia of the so called South Lebanon Army (SLA) have embarked on massive arrest of civilians in the occupied parts of southern Lebanon. The passengers arriving in the liberated parts of of southern Lebanon from occupied sector said that the Zionists and Antoine Lahad's mercenaries have arrested 250 people in rural areas of southern Lebanon.

The successful operations launched by the Islamic Resistance Movement in the occupied area are said to have made the Zionist regime suspicious of local inhabitants collaborating with the Islamic Resistance Movement, thus prompting it to embark on mass arrest of civilians.

Lebanon: Lahd Agent Killed in 'Resistance' Attack in South

NC2702131896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There has been a noticeable escalation of tension in the south this morning after the operation carried out by the Resistance men in which a member of the agent Antoine Lahd militia was killed and two others were injured. The details are as follows:

The Resistance men detonated an explosive charge at dawn today when an agent militia patrol was passing along the al-Tirah road in the western sector of the occupied area. The explosion killed one member of the patrol and injured two, according to the Lahd militia sources. Hizballah claimed responsibility for the explosion. A spokesman for Hizballah announced that a group from the Islamic Resistance set an ambush at dawn today for a patrol from the agent Antoine Lahd's militia. They attacked it with machine guns and artillery fire. They hit the military vehicle and killed and injured all those inside. The spokesman added that other groups shelled four other agent posts located on the edges of the occupied area between Rshaf and Haddathah. However, the spokesman did not specify how many people were killed or injured. [passage omitted]

This morning, the towns of Haris and Kafra were shelled by artillery fire. The occupation forces combed the area around Haddathah all the way to Jabal al-Za'tar and the outskirts of Bra'shit. At dawn today, the area came under machine-gun fire. Flares were thrown over the area from the helicopters that flew over the area throughout last night and until late this morning.

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Syria: Al-Mu'allim, SYRIA TIMES Condemn Jerusalem Bombings

JN2802125496 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1215 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Syria condemned the Jerusalem and Ashqelon operations in a semiofficial way today. This condemnation was not issued by an official spokesman or a responsible source, but was expressed through semiofficial press.

REUTER today cited the English-language daily SYRIA TIMES as saying that it condemns these attacks and the recent acts of violence, describing them as an ordeal to many Israelis. The SYRIA TIMES article is signed by Chief Editor Walid Shihadah. [passage omitted]

The Israeli radio said that Syrian chief delegate Walid al-Mu'allim expressed his regret at the two operations. Al-Mu'allim is getting ready to begin a new round of talks today with the Israeli side, led by Uri Savir. Both sides do not expect any breakthrough in this new round of Syrian-Israeli peace talks, particularly with the Israeli elections on 28 May.

Syria: Al-Asad Receives Iranian Vice President Habibi

JN2702184096 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1712 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 27 Feb (SANA)—At 1315 today, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad received at the People's Palace Iranian Vice President Dr. Hasan Habibi, Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hoseyn Sheykh-ol-Eslam, and Iranian Ambassador in Damascus Mohammad Hasan Akhtari-Forughi.

The meeting was attended by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', and Syrian Ambassador in Tehran Ahmad al-Hasan.

Dr. Habibi relayed a message from Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani to his excellency the president, who asked him to relay a reply message as well as his greetings and best wishes to the Iranian president. He also asked the Iranian vice president to relay his greetings and best wishes to Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran.

Emphasis was placed on the joint eagerness of Syria and Iran to safeguard and promote strong bilateral ties in the interest of the two countries, and also to serve common causes and goals.

The two sides believe that the current meeting of the Higher Joint Syrian-Iranian Committee in Damascus provides a propitious opportunity for exchanging views on all issues that concern the two sides, and also for pushing forward the march of joint cooperation and bilateral ties.

Dr. Habibi expressed the Islamic Republic of Iran's appreciation for Syria's principled stands.

The discussions also addressed developments in the peace process. His excellency the president commended the positions of the Islamic Republic of Iran toward Arab and Islamic causes.

Syria: Khaddam Begins Talks With Habibi-Led Iranian Delegation

JN2702183296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, vice president and head of the Syrian Arab side to the Higher Joint Syrian-Iranian Committee, received Dr. Hasan Habibi, Iranian vice president and head of the Iranian side to the committee meetings, at 1100 today.

The meeting was attended on the Syrian side by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and Syrian Ambassador to Iran Ahmad al-Hasan. For Iran, the talks were attended by Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, Deputy Foreign Minister Hoseyn Sheykh-ol-Eslam, and Iranian Ambassador in Damascus Mohammad Hasan Akhtari-Forughi. The conferees discussed and endorsed their agenda.

Dr. Hasan Habibi arrived in Damascus this morning on an official three-day visit to the Syrian Arab Republic, during which he will head the Iranian side to the meetings of the Higher Joint Syrian-Iranian Committee. [passage omitted]

Habibi is accompanied by an official delegation consisting of Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, Deputy Foreign Minister Hoseyn Sheykh-ol-Eslam, and several senior officials of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In a statement to the correspondent of the SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY, SANA, Habibi said that Syrian-Iranian relations are constructive, good, and strong. He added: We constantly seek to promote these ties. We meet here once every other year, as our joint meetings are held on a rotational basis. We meet in both Damascus and Tehran. During the Joint Committee meetings, we examine issues of common interest. We also discuss regional and international issues and exchange views on them, which are close.

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Concluding his statement, Habibi said: During these talks and joint march, our views get closer. As a matter of fact, we draw up practical plans for the future of our joint activities and efforts.

Syria: Prime Minister Receives Iranian Vice President

JN2802132296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi received Iranian Vice President Dr. Hasan Habibi and his delegation at 1030 [0830 GMT] today. The meeting was attended by Dr. Muhammad al- 'Imadi, minister of economy and foreign trade; the Syrian ambassador in Tehran; and the Iranian ambassador in Damascus. Discussions dealt with the existing cooperation between the two countries and means to develop this cooperation in various fields.

Syria: Iran's Habibi Says Bilateral Relations 'Excellent'

LD2702132996 Tehran IRNA in English 1232 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, Feb. 27, IRNA — Iranian First Vice-President Hasan Habibi in Damascus on Tuesday termed relations between Iran and Syria as excellent. He said bilateral relations and development of joint cooperation would be top on the agenda of his talks with Syrian officials. Habibi said Syria and Iran have a unified stance concerning international issues. Heading a high-ranking political delegation, Habibi left Tehran for Damascus earlier on Tuesday. Syrian Vice-President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' officially welcomed the Iranian delegation at Damascus airport.

Foreign minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati is also accompanying the Iranian first vice-president. Habibi is expected to hold talks with President Hafiz al-Asad and Khaddam on development of Tehran-Damascus relations and other issues of mutual interest.

During Habibi's visit, the joint high commission will meet. The commission, in its annual meetings in Tehran or Damascus, discusses important bilateral issues.

'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam had already paid a visit to Tehran and held talks with senior Iranian officials on Tehran-Damascus relations.

Meanwhile, the mass media in the region have given a wide coverage to Habibi's visit to Syria. Describing Tehran-Damascus ties as excellent, the media reported that the visit would serve to further strengthen bilateral relations.

Syria: Iran's Habibi Backs Palestinian Islamic 'Resistance'

LD2702200196 Tehran IRNA in English 1935 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Damascus, Syria, Feb 27 (IRNA) — Iran's First Deputy President Hasan Habibi told Syrian Vice-President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam here today that the Islamic resistance in Palestine needed support in its struggle against the Zionist entity.

He said the Islamic Republic had consistently supported the people and government of Syria in their support for the Islamic resistance against Zionist aggressions.

The Syrian official, in response, said that his government had maintained its inviolable stand in the face of the unjust expectations of the Zionist regime.

Khaddam said the relations between Iran and Syria would help further solidify the Islamic resistance in its fight with the Zionist regime.

The Iranian and Syrian officials here Tuesday also agreed on the agenda to be adopted by the supreme Irano-Syria Joint Commission, and also agreed to proceed with planning for closer collaboration between Tehran and Damascus. [passage omitted]

Syria: Iran's Habibi Meets Lebanese, Iraqi, Palestinian Figures

LD2802132896 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We draw your attention to a report by our colleague from Damascus on the visit of Vice President Hasan Habibi to Syria:

[Unidentified correspondent] This morning the first vice president met Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah, secretary general of the Lebanese Hizballah, and members of the central council of the movement. He praised the struggles and jihad of the activists of the Islamic resistance force in the face of the Zionists' aggressions.

Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah said that Hizballah's tireless struggle is based on divine and humanitarian values. He added that the movement would never submit to the U.S. and the Zionist regime's conspiracies.

Mr. Habibi also met heads of Iraqi combatant [mohareb] groups based in Damascus this morning. They exchanged views on the latest developments in Iraq and the situation of that country's Muslims. He expressed regret over the pain and suffering of the Iraqi people in the face of the U.S. economic embargo.

Mr. Habibi also had separate meetings with Dr. Ramadan 'Abdallah, secretary general of the Islamic Jihad

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in Palestine, and Ahmad Jibril, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command. They discussed the ways of implementing the struggle of the Muslim nation of Palestine in the occupied territories.

This morning Mr. Habibi also met the leaders of the 10 groups opposing the peace agreement with the Zionist regime and emphasized the need for the groups' solidarity and unity in the face of the Zionist regime conspiracies and the puppet government of 'Arafat.

Syria: Khaddam Denies Differences With Iran on Peace Process

JN2702183096 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received the Iranian delegation that arrived in Damascus this morning to hold the meetings of the Syrian-Iranain Joint Committee headed by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam on the Syrian side, and Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi on the Iranian side.

The meetings aim at discussing Arab, regional, and international developments and ways of bolstering bilateral relations in various fields.

Khaddam made a statement to Radio Monte Carlo on the rumors about tension in the Syrian-Iranian relations:

[Begin Khaddam recording] Bilateral relations are good. Over long years, these relations and confidence have been entrenched between the two capitals. There is no problem between the two sides, and we always discuss the best means for developing and strengthening relations. There are several joint interests between Syria and Iran, and between the Arab nation and Iran. As for the rumors about differences on the peace process, this is incorrect. We have a clear position on peace, and the Iranian leadership understands our position. [end recording]

The vice president denied that the talks will deal with Hizballh and its presence in southern Lebanon, and said this is an internal Lebanese affair that concerns the resistance.

Syria: Khaddam Says No Political Agreement Reached With Iraq

JN2802082896 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi continues his visit to Syria. Today he and his Syrian counterpart, 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, will lead a meeting of the Syrian-Iranian committee. Our correspondent in Damascus, Thana' al-Imam, asked Khaddam about Syrian-Iranian relations and about Damascus' position on Iraq:

[Begin recording] [Khaddam] Bilateral relations are good. The relations and the confidence between the countries have been entrenched over many years. There is no problem between the two sides, and we have discussed the best means to develop and strengthen relations. There are several common interests between Syria and Iran and between the Arab nation and Iran. Rumors about differences on the peace process are incorrect. We have a clear position on peace, and the Iranian leadership understands our position.

[Al-Imam] What about Iraq? Will you discuss the recent developments in Iraq situation? How do you respond to the Jordanian king's statement that certain neighboring states of Iraq, including Syria, have an interest there?

[Khaddam] We do not want to intervene or accept intervention in Iraq's domestic affairs. Everything that relates to Iraq is the business of the Iraqis themselves. However, we will study and discuss the proposed plans that target Iraq. Targeting Iraq means targeting the entire region. A proposal to establish a regional alliance incorporating some states in the region encroaches on national and pan-Arab security. It is, therefore, natural for us to discuss this subject with Iran and with our other Arab brothers. Rumors about Syrian designs on Iraq are not even worth responding to. Syria has always look for the good of all sisterly Arab states and every part of the Arab homeland.

[Al-Imam] What about the reports of a Syrian-Iraqi rapprochement?

[Khaddam] The two countries are estranged. However, there has been contact between the irrigation ministries in both countries to coordinate positions on the water issue. There is no political agreement.

[Al-Imam] Will you discuss the Hizballah during your meetings?

[Khaddam] This subject will not be discussed. Hizballah is a Lebanese party and is the business of its members and Lebanon. We will not discuss the issue of Hizballah or the domestic situation in any Arab country.

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Syria: Paper Comments on 'Strategic' Ties With Iran

JN2702191696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 27 Feb 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, TISHRIN comments on Syrian-Iranian relations in light of the meeting of the Syrian-Iranian joint committee scheduled for today.

The paper asserts that Syria is certain that its relations with Iran are strong and firm and based on solid foundations and principles. These relations are based on mutual respect, close cooperation, and an honest understanding of all developments and the course of action these developments may dictate, stemming from the interests of every country, its objectives, and independent policy.

TISHRIN adds: Syria and Iran are eager to promote these relations because they are the outcome of historical and cultural interaction between the two peoples, and not the result of passing circumstances. Relations between Syria and Iran have been strategic since Iran managed to achieve victory through an Islamic popular revolution that achieved progress and success for the Iranian people. Iran thus moved from one stage to another.

TISHRIN adds: Syria firmly supported and backed this revolution, in the interest of the two peoples and countries and the Arabs and Muslims all over the world.

The paper concludes: Syria looks forward to positive and constructive results of the meetings of the Syrian-Iranian joint committee. Syria appreciates the support extended to it by the Iranian Islamic revolution to champion Arab rights and Syria's demands regarding the restoration of its occupied land and all its national rights by all available means. This is meant to preserve our dignity, secure our future, and promote our free will to achieve our objective of progress, development, and liberation.

Syria: Participation in Maryland Talks Viewed

JN2802092196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 28 Feb 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an editorial titled "The Peace of International Legitimacy," TISHRIN says: Syrian-Israeli talks will resume today in Maryland with the participation of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Informed sources in Washington ruled out the possibility of achieving substantive progress in view of Israel's preoccupation with its elections.

TISHRIN adds: Syria agreed to participate in this round in response to the U.S. efforts, on one hand, and to demonstrate its sincere desire to establish a just and comprehensive peace, on the other.

TISHRIN asserts that the recent events in Israel revealed the urgent need for a genuine peace, which cannot be achieved without implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy, complying with international law, and giving each party its rights. The partial, incomplete agreements will not make peace and the security checkpoints and their complications will not provide security. Only a just and comprehensive peace, whose substance is the UN Security Council resolutions, can achieve security and stability.

TISHRIN concludes: Syria has always declared and will continue to declare that it is impossible to achieve peace without Israel's complete withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines and that there is no alternative to the return of the Golan Heights to Syria. Until the positions in Israel become clear, Syria will continue with the peace talks and will display the same position it has in the past. This position was summarized by President al-Asad when he said: We are prepared only for a just peace — a peace that will guarantee the return of all territory and rights, remove the occupation, and lead to the Syrian flag being raised over the entire Golan Heights.

Syria: 'Sources' Say No Breakthrough Likely in Latest Peace Talks

JN2802075996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A new round of Syrian-Israeli peace talks will open in Maryland, in the United States, today. Informed sources said this new round of talks will tackle basic and substantive issues related to a just and comprehensive peace, such as complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights and the security arrangements proposed for both sides of the 4 June 1967 line.

Sources ruled out the possibility of any practical breakthrough in the new talks because of the Israeli elections. They said, however, that several technical issues may be surmounted if the Israelis display good intentions.

A spokesman for the U.S. State Department said every effort must be made to achieve peace in the Middle East. He added: We have not yet arrived at a point that will lead to an agreement between the Syrians and the Israelis.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Iranian Border Guard Killed in Clash With Taleban

BK2402124096 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 24 Feb 96 p 12

[Report by Ismail Khan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar — An Iranian border security guard was killed and two were wounded in cross-fire with Taleban in Afghanistan's western Herat province bordering Iran.

Taleban leader Mowlawi Ihsanollah told The News here that the clashes took place on Tuesday night, the night of 'Id al-Fitr, when Islamic students militia patrolling the area in Eslam Qal'eh encountered intruding Iranian border guards. "The Iranian guards wanted our men to surrender and lay down their arms. Our men fired at them. One Iranian guard was killed and two were wounded while one was captured alive."

Ihsanollah is Governor General of five of Taleban-controlled Afghan provinces of Khowst, Paktia, Paktika, Vardak and Lowgar and is a member of Taleban's central executive committee in their headquarters in Kandahar.

A Taleban spokesman in Herat said the militia was on red alert in anticipation of an Iranian-backed attack by pro-Rabbani forces from the Iranian territory. Hundreds of supporters of Gen. Ismail Khan, the ex-Governor of Herat, had fled to Iran following the fall of Afghanistan's western province to the Taleban on Sept 5 last year.

The spokesman said the Iranians were allowed to collect their dead and wounded on the night of the clashes and the one captured alive was handed over to the Iranian Consul General by Governor of Herat, Mulla Yar Mohammad, on Thursday. He claimed that the Iranians in response to strong protest from the Taleban leadership had apologised for the intrusion. "We hope they will not repeat their mistake," the spokesman said.

Mowlawi Ihsanollah in his address to a Taleban gathering at Akora Khattak accused Iran of interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs by supporting what he called the illegal and un-Islamic Rabbani regime. "We asked the Iranians why they fear us. We are both anti-Americans and want the unity of Muslim Ummah [community]."

He said Iran was scared of Taleban turning Afghanistan into a harbinger of Islamic movements throughout the world. "Iran knows the Sunni Muslims will look towards Afghanistan and not it."

Insnullah lashed out at Washington for "blocking the resolution of Afghanistan crisis to prevent the Taleban from spreading their influence to the Muslim Central Asian Republics and Islamic movements the world over."

Brushing aside Iranian allegations of narcotics trafficking into Iran through the Taleban-controlled areas, Ihsanullah said the situation had been of its own making. "Iran has allowed infiltration of anti-Taleban people."

Earlier, the Taleban leader set two conditions for President Rabbani to remain in power. He asked Rabbani to enforce Sharia [Islamic law] and sever his ties with the communists and Russia. "How can we be subservient to someone who is a slave and agent. We don't feel the need to have further talks. We are ready to surrender all area under our control to him if he accepts the two conditions."

Afghanistan: Taleban Rocket Attacks on Kabul Leave 4 Dead

LD2802122096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] During the past 24 hours, 28 rockets have been fired on Kabul, leaving four people killed and 15 injured. Afghan Defense Ministry sources have said that the rocket attacks originated from Taleban positions in southern and southwestern Kabul.

Afghan news sources have reported that, as a result of its fear of increasing popular opposition to its presence in several Afghan provinces, the Taleban group is trying to recruit more forces.

The Taleban group, which began large-scale operations in the month of Mehr [beginning 23 September] aimed at capturing Kabul, has suffered extensive losses and damage to date.

Afghanistan: Taleban Group Reportedly Captures Fortified Position

LD2702193596 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0230 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Taleban group has captured 16 men of the Kabul administration as well as a strategic position. According to a report by a Taleban source, yesterday [26 February] morning the Taleban attacked a Kabul administration position in the Sherollah [name as received] area near Chakari and Khord-Kabul. As a result they captured a Kabul administration fortified position and took 16 of its men prisoner. The source

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claimed that they had also captured an assortment of arms and ammunition.

The Kabul administration's Ministry of Defense officials have rejected the Taleban claim and described it as baseless propaganda. No other source has confirmed the report.

Afghanistan: Konduz Province Security Situation Deteriorating

LD2702211096 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0230 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Because of repression and insecurity in Konduz Province, the residents of the city [as heard] are seeking refuge in Imam Saheb district. A source in Hezb-e Eslami reported to us by radio that the security situation in Konduz Province has been deteriorating for some time, and shopkeepers have abandoned their businesses because of looting by the Kabul administration warmongers. They have transferred their families, businesses, and personal belongings to safer places.

On top of lack of security in Konduz city, the source said, every day a number of our compatriots are killed in clashes between the men of Jam'iyate and Shura-e Nezar. As a result of the clashes so far 10 people, including the deputy commander of the artillery brigade of the 54th Division, have been killed.

A military official of Hezb-e Eslami told us that Safar Mohammad, deputy commander of the Kabul administration's 54th Division in Konduz, has escaped to Tajikistan with the salaries of the division's staff.

Former Konduz Province Governor Mullah Mohammad Omar, who was head of the financial department in the province at that time, was killed during clashes between supporters of Jam'iyate and Shura-e Nezar. Kabul administration officials in the province say that he was killed in a traffic accident.

Afghanistan: High Coordination Council Commission Meets in Peshawar

LD2702170296 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Dari to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The High Coordination Council's joint commission held a session in Peshawar on 25 February to discuss the situation in the country [words indistinct] and fruitful talks were considered the only sensible way of resolving the crisis in the country.

A Radio Message of Freedom correspondent reports that the session, which was held in the council's office under the chairmanship of the esteemed Sebghatollah Mojadeddi, comprehensively discussed the political and military situation in the country and agreed that the commission members should meet regularly in order to promote coordination and understanding between the member parties of the council and that the commission should be continuously active.

The report adds that the session was attended by Humayun Jarir, representative of Hezb-e Eslami; 'Abdol Baqi Torkestani, representative of Jonbesh-e Melli; Solayman Yari, representative of Jabha-e Nejat-e Melli; and Dr. Taleb, representative of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami.

At the beginning Humayun Jarir reported to the session the Kabul administration's proposal on the formation of an interim government. After discussing the matter, the council unanimously resolved that Hezb-e Eslami's talks with the Kabul administration were useful and should continue and the outcome of the talks should be reported to the council.

Iran

Iran: Habibi's Damascus Visit Unrelated to Syria-Israel Talks

LD2802133196 Tehran IRNA in English 1305 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, Feb. 28, IRNA — Iranian ambassador to Damascus, Mohammad Hasan Akhtari said here on Wednesday [28 February] the current visit of Iranian first vice-president, Hasan Habibi to Damascus has nothing to do with negotiations to be held between Syria and Israel. He told IRNA that the current Iran-Syria talks had already been planned and are being held following Habibi's visit to Damascus.

Akhtari said following the visit to Tehran of President Hafiz al-Asad in 1990, the Tehran-Damascus supreme joint commission was formed. The commission studies the latest bilateral and international developments every six months, he said.

The ambassador said the current visit to Damascus of Iranian vice-president is taking place within the framework of the eighth meeting of the supreme commission.

Iran: Vice President Habibi's Visit to Syria Viewed

LD2702143196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1107 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Dr. Hasan Habibi, first vice president of our country, is heading a delegation to Syria and meeting the officials of that country to review and discuss international and regional issues. During the trip,

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the Iran-Syria joint commission chaired by Mr. Habibi and Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, will also convene to review relations between the two countries. [passage omitted]

Dr. Habibi's trip to Syria in very important considering recent developments in the region, including negotiations between Syria and the Zionist regime.

Iran and Syria, as two strategic allies in the Middle East, have always acted in a coordinated and similar manner towards regional issues. While it seemed that after the start of talks between Damascus and Tel Aviv, a split had occurred in relations between the two allies, the contacts between the two countries and their emphasis on their coordinated stances, showed that Tehran and Damascus continue to need each other to advance their policies.

When Mr. Habibi's trip to Damascus was postponed in January, Syria's First Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam announced that nothing was going to have a negative impact on Iran and Syria's amiable relations. While stressing the continuation of coordination between Tehran and Damascus, Mr. Khaddam pointed to the common interests of the two countries and emphasized the continuation of talks between Iran and Syria.

Following the break in the talks between Syrian and the Zionist regime, and after Damascus insisted on its just demands that Israeli forces should withdraw from the Golan Heights, Israel and America began to exert extensive propaganda pressure against Syria. America announced that it would keep Syria's name on the black list as a terrorist-breeding country. The Zionist regime, on its part, and in spite of the fact that it is itself the agent of tension and war in the Middle East region, made peace-seeking gestures and presented Syria as the side that caused a break in the talks.

Under these circumstances, coordination between Iran and Syria, while strengthening their positions vis-a-vis common enemies, will will also fortify Syria's stance in the face of pressures brought on it to make it give way to the concessions that the Zionist regime wants.

Iran: Tehran, Islamabad Have Common Strategy on Afghan Issue

LD2702114496 Tehran IRNA in English 0911 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 27, IRNA — Pakistani Ambassador to Tehran Khalid Mahmud stated that Iran and Pakistan are working on a formula through which peace and stability could be established in Afghanistan.

In an interview with the English-language daily 'IRAN NEWS' on Tuesday, he stressed that Tehran and Islamabad have common strategies for resolving the Afghan problem for which 'both countries feel regretful because of the sufferings of the people of that country.

"Another aspect of Irano-Pakistani efforts is to facilitate sharing of power by the existing factions in Afghanistan," Mahmud added.

On the recent visit of Pakistani foreign secretary, Najmuddin Shaikh to Iran, he reiterated that the visit was aimed at discussing the Afghan issue with the Iranian officials.

Referring to exchange of visits between senior Iranian and Pakistani officials, he said the two countries officials are having discussions on the Afghan issue on all levels including at the level of prime minister, president, foreign minister and even the embassies.

As to Islamabad-Tehran close relations, the ambassador noted, "different points of view on different subjects are quite natural, but it never means that there is a dispute between our two countries, as some newspapers try to insinuate."

Iran: Commentary Views Afghan Conflict Negotiations

LD2802142596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1109 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Afghanistan's Coordination Council and support for Hekmatyar's talks with the government is the title of our last political commentary today.

A week after the publication of reports suggesting progress in the peace talks held by the government of Afghanistan and the Hezb-e Eslami, the coalition of opposition groups known as the Coordination Council has declared its support for these talks. It is being said that the Coordination Council, which is made up of a coalition of four major Afghan parties, including the Hezb-e Eslami, led by Golboddin Hekmatyar, gave its backing in a meeting held on Monday to the decision of the Hezb-e Eslami, which is one of that council's influential members, to move closer to Rabbani's government. Earlier this week [Iranian week starts on Saturday], Afghan Government sources announced that the talks held during the past few months between government envoys and Hekmatyar's representatives have yielded satisfactory results. There are even suggestions that the two sides might achieve an important agreement on the formation of a coalition government.

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Many political analysts believe there are several reasons behind this decision taken by the Coordination Council which may have a decisive effect on developments in Afghanistan. First, it may be that Hekmatyar's allied groups in the Coordination Council, that is, the Movement of the North and the National Salvation Front, have come to the conclusion that opposing the continuation of the talks between Hekmatyar's party and the government could lead to a rift in the Council, and they have given their consent to the talks in order to prevent such a rift.

The other reason mentioned by analysts for the Coordination Council's support for the talks between Hekmatyar and the government is that the members of the council have decided that a military balance has been struck between the three major forces involved in Afghan developments, that is, the government, the Coordination Council, and the Taleban group, and that this balance can be used as an acceptable basis for negotiations, because this balance of forces means that none of the parties to the talks would be able to gain anything other than their realistic share in any possible meeting between the representatives of all the opposition groups and the government.

In addition to this, the hard line approach adopted by the Taleban group in their talks with members of the Coordination Council dashed all their hopes of achieving an understanding or compromise with that group toward the formation of a united anti- government front. The possibility that the Taleban group may, at an opportune time, decide to hold talks with the government has also induced the Coordination Council member parties to gain the upper hand in the initiation of talks with the government, especially in view of the fact that the approach of warm weather has increased the possibility of renewed military operations by the Taleban and a strengthening of their positions around Kabul.

At any rate, the welcome extended by the major Afghan groups to talks between Hekmatyar and representatives of the Afghan Government is, for whatever reason it is occurring, good news for the people of Afghanistan, who know that their tribal and ethnic divisions can only be solved and resolved in the political form of the division of power and on the basis of talks and compromise. In the opinion of many analysts, such a development in the outlook of Afghan groups toward the resolution of that country's bloody conflict will prevent an unpleasant turn in the political destiny of Afghanistan and an opening of doors to the involvement in Afghanistan of countries from outside the region, and will pave the way for the consolidation of national Afghan sovereignty over their entire country.

Iran: Minister Announces Contracts on Turkmen Oil Projects

LD2502000096 Tehran IRNA in English 1743 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bojnurd, Khorasan Prov. Feb 24, IRNA — Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh said here Saturday that Iranian contractors managed to win a tender for implementation of two oil projects in Turkmenistan.

Aqazadeh said the projects included laying of gas pipelines and establishing a unit for making petrol out of fuel oil.

He predicted the total cost of the projects would stand at dlrs. 150 million.

Iran: More Money To Finish Turkmenistan Gas Pipeline Project

LD2602211396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Economic Council, in its latest session chaired by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, allocated 150 billion rials to speed up and complete implementation phase of the Turkmenistan gas pipeline project.

The council also allocated 75.8 billion rials to complete the jetties of Bandar Abbas and Bandar-e Imam Khomeyni ports, to complete the crude oil pumping stations along the Marun to Esfahan pipeline, and to build a 1,330,000-barrel oil storage tank in the Kharg island.

Iran: Kazakhstan Calls For Export of Oil Via Iranian Territory

LD2702164196 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The oil minister of Kazakhstan has called for the export of Kazakh oil via Iran.

In a meeting in Tehran today with Mr. Aqazadeh, our country's oil minister, Mr. Balghymbayev proposed that around two to five million tonnes of Kazakh crude oil could be transported every year from the Caspian Sea shores to Persian Gulf and then, with Tehran's cooperations, exported to international markets.

Mr. Aqazadeh, in turn, expressed the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran for oil cooperation with Kazakhstan.

Negotiations, with the aim of reaching a final agreement, will be continued during the next few days.

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Iran: Paper Says Saddam's Inner Circle Contracting

LD2702135396 Tehran IRNA in English 0907 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 27, IRNA — A morning daily Tuesday [27 February] commented on the killing of Saddam Husayn's two sons-in-law, saying that paradoxical as it may seem, the Iraqi president is seeing his wishes come true one after another, obviously due in part to the blessings of his permanent underwriters in Washington.

Two high-profile "traitors" were taken care of by their clan members, the Iraqi opposition remains as divided as ever, the west says there is currently no viable option to Saddam's clique, the regime's Arab antagonists are themselves in deep trouble, the English-language 'KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL' wrote.

"Saudi Arabia is in the vortex of a power struggle, Bahrain is falling apart, the royalty in Qatar is fighting for the throne and Kuwait as usual feels threatened and unstable," it noted. The Islamic Republic of Iran, the only power in the region that can keep Saddam and his generals in line, is preoccupied with its own post- war reconstruction, added the paper.

There is simply no guarantee the status quo in Baghdad will not change, it stated, adding, "the president's inner circle is getting smaller than before as some pretty important obstacles (for future rulers) are being removed."

Maybe, this is what the foreign proponents of change inside Iraq actually want and given the culture of politics and intrigue in Baghdad, the day may not be too far when the president signs the order to liquidate his own son, 'Udayy, or vice versa, it concluded.

Iran: Daily Attacks CIA Use of Journalists as Covert Agents

LD2402230996 Tehran IRNA in English 1225 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 24, IRNA — An English daily Saturday [24 February] denounced the policy of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) using journalists to spy in other countries.

In its editorial, IRAN NEWS commented on the Thursday confirmation made by CIA Director John Deutch on the agency's use of journalists and clerics for espionage activities.

"This shameless confession of the notorious CIA boss regarding U.S. state-sponsored crimes has endangered the integrity of American as well as other journalists and clerics," it stressed.

Turning to CIA-sponsored criminal activities in Iran, the paper referred to the recent allocations of dlrs. 20 million to fund anti- Iran plots, saying, "ironically, after so many official confessions, the U.S. still shamelessly claims that it is a champion of human rights and democracy."

"About the journalists and clerics, we expect worldwide protests to denounce the U.S. Administration for denigrating journalists and forcing clerics to disregard their holy vows."

Henceforth, the editorial said, American journalists will always be suspect and will face problems in gathering and writing news about Third World countries.

Stressing that the genuine journalists will also suffer, it noted that the CIA uses foreign journalists thus non-U.S. reporters may likewise be facing similar problems in their activities.

"It is the foremost duty of all journalists to protest this CIA policy with one voice in order to save the professional dignity and integrity of journalists," concluded the daily.

Iran: Commentator Views Regional Implications of Bahrain Events

NC2802124296 Tehran SALAM in Persian 13 Feb 96 p 12

[Unattributed commentary: "The Islamic Revolution in Bahrain"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] The sweet sleep in Bahrain has gradually adopted another form. Until last year it was the military port for the American navy controlling the Persian Gulf. In under a year, feeling Kuwait's liberation from the Iraqi Ba'thist occupation had granted them the necessary legitimacy to overtly state their presence in the region, America officially acknowledged the fifth fleet's command in Bahrain and ended its so-called imperceptible presence in the region.

The instigatory and corrupt presence of the foreign tourists, especially of the Americans in Bahrain's public places, and their participation in the Manama marathon last year instigated feelings in Bahrain; it was the flame that sparked the nationwide uprising. The Bahraini Government used various tactics to distract the uprising but the Al Khalifah regime's efforts failed and the government and—mostly foreign—military officials started to crush the people and active political groups. Hundreds of state centers for industry, services, and culture were

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attacked by demonstrators and the opposition. But the behavior of the statesmen, who also had foreign support, aggravated the situation. The uprising is sinking deeper and deeper roots. If it is controlled temporarily it will simply become a center of insecurity for foreign forces and their domestic minions after which Bahrain will no longer be a center for corruption or a center guiding monetary and financial networks in the Persian Gulf. Bahrain belongs to the people of Bahrain despite efforts by the Bahraini and regional mass media to portray Iran as having a direct hand in the nationwide uprising. But there is no doubt that this uprising stems from the chronic problems facing Bahraini leaders. Many media have admitted this. The government's failure to establish contact with the opposition, which consists of Shiites, who comprise over 80 percent of the 500,000 population, the Sunnis, and even small nationalistic groups, is listed as the main reason for the uprising heightening during the past year. The rise in unemployment, especially among the Shiite majority, is said to be among the reasons for the people's dissatisfaction. Western analysts can no longer say an uprising with a religious basis in a Muslim country stems solely from fundamentalism and poverty. Bahrain is rich and the opposition's demand for a just parliament to undertake legislature and establish majority rights vis-a-vis the ruling political minority show the comprehensive ideas and views of the opposition and that the sensationalism of the regional mass media will not help solve Bahrain's problems.

Replacing the old forces with new forces in the region, something the West, especially Washington, has been calling for, is a double- edged sword; this time it has turned against them.

Replacing old conservative and inflexible ideas with licentious thoughts has cost the foreign powers in the country control of the developments. Despite their show of strength and force they have been unable to prevent the uprising from growing. All this is at a time when the adoption of an iron-fist policy in Bahrain, even in the interim, can have dangerous dimensions for Bahrain and the entire region.

Whatever the rivalry of foreign forces in Bahrain, it cannot answer the uprising and the existing injustice in Bahrain, where another force, stemming from the thinking and spirituality of the Islamic Revolution, is firmly and powerfully continuing its path. If people are careless about this path, they will only aggravate the flames of the fire.

Iran: Spokesman on Velayati Tour of Central Asia, Caucasus

LD2702174796 Tehran IRNA in English 1532 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 27 (IRNA) — A spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry said the visit to the central Asian and Caucasian republics by Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, to start on Wednesday, would aim to "strengthen bilateral relations" and "regional cooperation."

Mahmud Mohammadi, referring to the "good and strategic" relations between Iran and Russia and the interest of the two sides in easing tension in the region, said the issue of the ceasefire between the Tajik Government and opposition which was agreed upon in Tehran last year under auspices of Tehran and Moscow, would be one of the main axis of Velayati's talks aimed at bolstering peace talks and materializing a national reconciliation.

He underscored the importance of Iran's regional policies and multilateral cooperation for peace and stability in the regions covering the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS).

Mohammadi remarked that Velayati's visit would take place within the framework of strengthening Iran's peace-seeking diplomacy in Tajikistan, following up joint cooperation with Russia in the Caspian Sea region and also trilateral regional cooperation.

He expressed concern over the incident which happened to the Tajik opposition leader and said such events would not help establish A just peace in the republic but would further complicate the situation.

The spokesman said the only solution to THE Tajik crisis was THE creation of an atmosphere of mutual trust and continuation of collective efforts by countries supervising the ceasefire. He expressed hope that the two sides, by further strengthening mutual understanding, help materialize Iran's peace-seeking efforts.

On Velayati's talks with officials of the republics of the CIS, central Asia and Caucasus, he said on behalf of President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the Iranian foreign minister will invite those officials to take part in the opening ceremony of the Mashhad- Sarakhs-Tajan Railway.

The railway, he stressed, will entail outstanding achievements for regional cooperation and the development of economic and transportation ties between the regional countries and other regions via Iran.

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The railway will be officially inaugurated in the Iranian month of Ordibehesht (April-May) in the presence of a number of heads of state of the regional countries.

Iran: Velayati Leaves for Uzbekistan at Start of CIS Tour

LD2802065796 Tehran IRNA in English 0609 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 28, IRNA — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati heading a high-ranking delegation left for Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Wednesday morning, at the first leg of a tour which will take him to a number of Central Asian and Caucasus states as well as Russia, Belarus and Ukraine.

Velayati is carrying messages from President Akbar Hashemi- Rafsanjani for heads of Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS), inviting them to participate in the inaugural ceremony of Sarakhs railways. Bilateral relations as well as regional developments will be among major topics to be discussed by Velayati and senior officials of these countries.

The Iranian foreign minister was seen off at Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport by a number of Central Asian ambassadors to Tehran. Velayati paid a one-day visit to Damascus, Syria, on Tuesday. He was accompanied by First Vice-President Hasan Habibi.

Iran: Va'ezi Says Tehran To Continue Peace Efforts in Tajikistan

LD2802125496 Tehran IRNA in English 1208 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 28, IRNA — Tehran will pursue its efforts to renew talks among warring parties in Tajikistan in order to achieve a permanent peace in that country, Deputy Foreign Minister for Euro-American Affairs Mahmud Va'ezi said Tuesday [28 February].

In an interview with the English daily 'IRAN NEWS' printed Wednesday, he added, "it was a matter of concern that talks between the opposition and the Tajik Government could not produce favorable results."

He stressed that Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, during his visits to Tashkent and dushanbe, will be discussing Tajikistan's problems and Iran's proposal for a cease-fire.

The foreign minister will be extending invitations to regional leaders to attend the may 13 inauguration of the Tajan-Sarakhs railway that is part of the rail line connecting China to Europe.

Confirming Velayati's visit to Moscow, Va'ezi said that Iran has succeeded in securing the support of both Russian officials and the Tajik opposition for resuming peace negotiations.

"Iran put forward a cease-fire proposal without any preconditions, which was accepted by all parties," he disclosed, stating that to implement the Iranian plan, the parties agreed to extend the cease-fire.

On Tehran-Dushanbe relations, he said the future is bright as the two countries have a long history of cultural links, and added that Iran is ready to give all the necessary assistance for the reconstruction of Tajikistan.

Iran: LMI's Yazdi, IRMOI's Nabavi Rejected by Supervisory Council

LD2702112396 Tehran IRNA in English 1056 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 27, IRNA — The names of three more candidates of the Liberation Movement of Iran (LMI) have been rejected by the Supervisory Council (screening committee) which oversees the election process, informed sources reported.

The English-language daily 'IRAN NEWS' printed on Tuesday added that those who have been rejected include, LMI Secretary General Ebrahim Yazdi, former Interior Minister Hashem Sabaghian and Tehran university Professor Gholam 'Abbas Tavassoli. Reliable sources also told the paper that Islamic Revolution Mojahedin Organization of Iran (IRMOI) leader and former Minister of Heavy Industries Behzad Nabavi was also rejected by the Supervisory Council.

The paper also quoted another source as saying that majority of the members of the sitting Majles have been rejected by the Supervisory Council.

Iran: Qom Prayer Leader Discusses Majles Elections in Sermon

LD2402205596 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1909 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Summary] This week's Friday sermons in Qom were delivered by Ayatollah 'Abdollah Javadi-Amoli, Friday prayer leader of Qom. The program was broadcast at 1909 GMT instead of its usual slot of 1430 GMT.

His first sermon, lasting 23 minutes, is devoted to piety with references to a religious work attributed to Imam 'Ali. In the second sermon, lasting 20 minutes, he speaks about the blessings of the month of Ramadan. He then refers to the forthcoming Majles elections, pointed to the guidelines of Khomeyni regarding the importance of the Majles, and he adds that, with the

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exception of the leader and the Assembly of Experts, the Majles is responsible for "a lot of the tasks" of government and country. It can approve or reject ministers, and question their performance as well as the performance of other institutions of the state. So those who enter this Majles must be eligible, competent, and pious individuals who "will prevent a repetition of the Constitution [Revolution] movement, God forbid." He goes on: "Well, as you know, in the course of the constitutional movement, the clergy were pushed aside."

He says that if those who are not qualified gain access to the Majles this will prevent those who are eligible from standing. He therefore urges those who are pious, competent, and eligible to stand. He affirms that it is a religious duty to participate in the elections.

In conclusion, he hopes that the talks between Afghan and Pakistani officials in Iran will be fruitful and end the fighting with God's help.

Iran: Majles Speaker Nateq-Nuri on Upcoming Election

LD2402213596 Tehran IRNA in English
2119 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 24, IRNA — Majles Speaker 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, called on people to elect representatives who have faith, courage, political acumen, are loyal to the revolution, and are committed to the principle of Velayat-e Faqih (rule of the jurisconsult).

He said the Iranian Majles is among the most powerful parliaments in the world, and to quote the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, it is an embodiment of the national will of Iran's Muslim people. The speaker noted that if the representatives are brave and have an independent frame of mind, the independence of the Majles will be guaranteed.

Iran: Yazdi Says Only 4 Freedom Movement Candidates Eligible

LD2402214996 Tehran IRNA in English
1059 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 24, IRNA — Secretary General of the Freedom Movement (FM), Ebrahim Yazdi, said that 11 of the 15 candidates sponsored by his organization were rejected by the screening committee of the Guardian Council during the second evaluation stage of candidates for election to the fifth Majles. In an interview with the English daily 'IRAN NEWS' printed Saturday, Yazdi criticized the screening process and said, "no reason was given for the rejections." The paper further quoted him as having said, "we really do not know what criteria the screening committee has adopted for determining the eligibility of FM candidates."

According to Yazdi, nominees whose papers have been approved by the committee are: Yazdi, Gholam 'Abbas Tavasoli, university professor, Hashem Sabaghian, former interior minister, and Ezatollah Sahabi, former planning minister.

The Freedom Movement candidates were only elected to the first Majles. The 11 nominees who were rejected in the first stage of screening have filed their complaint and were turned down again. "They have now filed their final complaint against their disqualifications with the Guardian Council itself," he told the paper.

Iran: Majles Speaker Nateq-Nuri Possible G-6 Candidate

LD2502102696 Tehran IRNA in English
0721 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 25, IRNA — The possibility of the name of Majles Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri being on the G-6 list is the main topic of discussion between the faction of senior executive officials (G-6) and Jame'e Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM) of Tehran, wrote the English-language daily 'IRAN NEWS' on Sunday.

The paper quoting a reliable source added that, the G-6 is working on a compromise formula which, if approved by JRM, will include the name of speaker Nateq-Nuri in the list of G-6 or otherwise known as Khedmatgozaran-e Sazandegi.

The source who was talking to the daily on condition of anonymity said, in return, JRM is asked to include the name of the former Interior Minister Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Abdollah Nuri in its list of candidates.

"The JRM has so far declined to include the name of Nuri and has stated that it prefers Ms. Faeze Hashemi instead," the source pointed out.

'Abdollah Nuri and Ms. Hashemi, who is daughter of President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, are both in the G-6 list of candidates.

Iran: Zahra Mostafavi on Parliamentary Elections

LD2502115196 Tehran IRNA in English
1042 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 25, IRNA — Head of women's society and daughter of the late Imam Khomeyni, Ms. Zahra Mostafavi said only those who are faithful to the principles of the revolution are eligible to contest the March 8 parliamentary elections.

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In an interview printed in the English-language daily 'KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL' on Sunday, she noted that the essential theme of the revolution is that we want to be ourselves, independent in thought and in making decisions.

On the principle of not maintaining links with the United States, she said, one who still does not hear the people's loud voice against the U.S. is not qualified to represent the people in the Majles.

On active presence of political groups in the elections, Ms. Mostafavi stressed that it is the right of all poltiical parties and groups to be active in the elections and introduce their own candidates. But they are also obliged to safeguard the revolution's principles.

She urged the people to actively participate in the Majles elections and elect their candidates with wisdom.

Iran: Security Forces To Protect Ballot Boxes in Majles Elections

LD2502213296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The law enforcement forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran have made the necessary preparations to maintain security for the fifth round of Islamic Consultative Majles elections.

Announcing the above, Brigadier General Ansari, deputy commander in charge of coordination of law enforcement forces, added: the responsibility for protecting and maintaining the security of 30,000 ballot boxes will rest on the law enforcement forces. And the personnel of the forces do not have rights to intervene in the elections process.

He advised the officials of the law enforcement forces to even avoid writing the names of the candidates on ballot papers for illiterate people.

Iran: Islamic Revolution Mojahedin To Offer Candidates for Majles

LD2602122196 Tehran IRNA in English 1040 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — Secretary General of the Islamic Revolution Mojahedin Organization (IRMO) Mohammad Salamati told the English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' that his organization is a political body and is to nominate candidates for the March 8 Majles elections. In an interview with the daily on Monday he added that his group's list will not include any candidate of Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM) [Militant Clergy Association] of Tehran. He added that his organization and Majma'-e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez (MRM) [Militant Clerics Society] share the same political outlook and both are left-wingers.

Commenting on the list of candidates by Kargozaran-e Sazandegi [Reconstruction Officials], he said that the list includes 10 right- wingers, 10 left-wingers and 10 independent candidates. "In my opinion there seems to be a contest among the individuals rather than political outlooks. Therefore, the IRMO has no intention of forming a coalition with the above group," he said.

Salamati did not disclose list of the candidates put forward by his organization but said that six of the nominees failed to secure approval of the screening committee. "Some former ministers, lawyers, deputy ministers, and ... have been among the rejected candidates," he claimed. [sentence as received]

Iran: Council To Pass List of Candidates to Interior Ministry

LD2602130096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Guardian Council has announced that it will convey the final list of the candidates for the Majles elections to the Ministry of Interior tonight.

Once the Ministry of Interior issues the final list to the governorships and divisional districts of the election constituencies throughout the country, the final results of the screening of the candidates will be issued to the candidates themselves and to the public by the governorships and divisional districts on 28 February.

The screening teams of the country's election constituencies and supervisory teams of the Guardian Council assessed the files of over 5,000 candidates in the course of 21 days.

Iran: Khamene'i Advises Experts of Limits to Campaign Slogans

LD2702160396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At a meeting today with members of the Assembly of Experts His Eminence Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, the great leader of the Islamic Revolution, described as very bright the future prospects of the Islamic system, the process of development, and solutions to the country's problems. He said that the severity of political propaganda attacks of the enemies of Islam is a symptom of their panic and fear in the face

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of the increasing power and credibility of Islamic Iran and the Islamic nation.

The great leader of the revolution pointed out that orderly activity by the legislative organ is a sign of the system's health and efficiency. He added: The regular sessions held by the Assembly of Experts show the positive and active participation of its members in the tasks that are expected from them; and at the same time these sessions will have other general positive effects.

Explaining the main objectives of a united global arrogance vis- a-vis the Islamic system, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i said: The enemies of Islam have two objectives in mind: Breaking the spiritual link with and the aspirations that Muslim nations gain from the Islamic system, and secondly undermining the Islamic system from within.

The great leader of revolution added: Global arrogance has realized that the Islamic system has remained a symbol, essence, and source of aspiration and strength for world Muslims despite all the incidents and ups and downs and the enemies' conspiracies. [passage omitted]

That is why global arrogance has become intensely distressed and worried. It tries to undermine, in an organized and extensive manner, the spiritual links and aspiration that the Muslim nations gain from the Islamic system through any possible means. Naturally, their failure in this direction shows the strength and credibility of the Islamic system.

On efforts by the enemies of Islam to undermine the system from within, the great leader of the revolution added: Global arrogance has learnt from experience that military offensives, the imposition of economic sanctions and methods that rely on external onslaughts will not affect the Islamic Iran very much. It, therefore, tries to undermine the regime from within through various methods, including cultural onslaughts.

The great leader of revolution also said that among other methods applied by the enemies of the Muslim nation of Iran for this purpose, are efforts to undermine the ideological necessities [zarouriat-e fekri] of the Islamic system including the principle of velayat-e faqih [guardianship of the (supreme) jurisconsult], by intensifying their foreign radio propaganda and obtaining incorrect analyses from inexpert and inexperienced people.

Referring to the bright future of the Islamic system, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i praised the strong, faithful, and meaningful presence of people in the marches marking 22 Bahman [11 February, anniversary of revolution] and international Jerusalem Day. He added: Truly I cannot find enough words to describe my appreciation of these people and I want to convey my thanks to the people of the various parts of the country through you. [passage omitted]

The great leader of revolution said: The people's presence in the anniversary of Islamic Revolution and the international Jerusalem Day was such that it forced the enemies of Islam to admit this. Of course their propaganda is that the government has brought the people onto the streets. Despite this propaganda, it is obvious to all that the participation of the mass of the people on the scenes of defense of Islamic revolution was a meaningful presence, fully voluntarily and based on belief in God. This presence neutralizes the enemies' propaganda against the system and some of the poison being spread inside the country. This is very important. [passage omitted]

The great leader of the Islamic revolution also stressed that during the process of elections the adoption of campaign slogans is not a problem as long as the slogans are aimed at highlighting the relevant priorities of groups and are not aimed at criticizing other groups. The groups involved in the elections must pay attention carefully and meticulously to choose slogans to prove themselves and not to criticize others.

Before the great leader's speech, Ayatollah Amini-Najafabadi, deputy speaker of the Assembly of Experts, in his speech, described the activities of the various commissions of the sixth session of the second rounds of the Assembly of Experts and evaluated the results of the session as good.

Iran: Sunni Muslim Leader in Fars Urges Large Election Turnout

LD2702183596 Tehran IRNA in English 1704 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Shiraz, Feb 27 (IRNA) — The leader of the Sunni Muslims in the Khonj region of Larestan in southern Fars Province has called on all Sunni Muslims in the region to take part in the forthcoming Majles elections.

In a statement the Sunni leader Haj Shaykh Abdorrazaq Abunajmi [name as received] described the Fifth Majles Elections as particularly important and said that the world arrogance is trying to entice people away from the Islamic revolution scenes one way or another.

Abunajmi said the active presence of the Sunnite people in the region and other regions in the southern part of Fars Province serves as a sign of their reaffirmed allegiance with the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, and their deep attachment to Islam and the Islamic Republic.

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Iran: Official Says Over 3,200 Eligible Majles Election Candidates

LD2702182596 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1730 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The number of candidates eligible to be voted for [as deputies] in the Fifth Majles Elections is more than 3,220.

The head of the State Elections HQ, in an interview with our correspondent an hour ago, said: The number of candidates whose eligibility has been endorsed in the various stages, shows an increase of over 50 percent compared to previous elections. The ratio for Tehran is up 250 percent. [There are 270 deputies in the Majles]

Iran: Approved Majles Election Candidates Total 2,232

LD2702220796 Tehran IRNA in English 2134 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 28 (IRNA) — Head of the Elections Headquarters Alireza Tabesh said here today that the Guardians Council had approved the qualification of a total of 3,232 Majles candidates for elections. The names of those candidates, 420 of them in Tehran, were communicated to 196 constituencies in various parts of Iran.

In all, 605 candidates for Tehran Province have been approved, that is 224 more than for the previous term of the Legislative Assembly of Iran [Majles].

Iran: Reconstruction Group Lists Tehran Candidates

LD2802085396 Tehran IRNA in English 0755 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 28, IRNA — The Group of Six senior government officials, Kargozaran-e Sazandegi (G-6) [Reconstruction Officials], has produced its list of 30 candidates for Tehran constituency for the March 8 Majles elections for the 270-seat Majles. The list, which has been approved by the election screening committees, was made available to IRNA Tuesday night. It includes 10 ulema and five women as follows:

Mohammad Etemadi (chancellor of Sharif Technical University), 'Abbas Sheybani (former minister, present Majles deputy), Mohammad Hashem Rahbari (Majles deputy), Mostafa Mo'in (former minister of culture and higher education), Mohammad Asghari (former justice minister), Dr. Reza Malekzadeh (former health minister), Morteza Alviri (presidential advisor, head of free trade zones), Mohammad Rahmati (academic), 'Abolqasem Sarhaddizadeh (former labor minister), 'Ali Reza Mahjub (head of Labor House), Davud Tajeran (Tehran district mayor), Mohammad Reza Taqavimanesh (Commerce Ministry official), 'Abolqasem Ashuri (deputy mayor of Tehran), Naser Khaleqi, Mehdi Hojjat (former deputy guidance minister), Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Abutorabi, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mahmud Do'a'i, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad 'Ali Movahedi-Kermani, Hojjat ol-Eslam Qorban 'Ali Dorri-Najafabdi, Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohsen Mojtahed Shabestari, Hojjat ol-Eslam Hassan Rowhani, Hojjat ol-Eslam Majid Anzari, Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Abdollah Nuri, Hojjat ol-Eslam Serajeddin Musavi, Ms. Fa'ezeh Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Ms. Fatemeh Ramazanzadeh, Soheila Jolodarzadeh, Sedigheh Moqadasi, Marzieh Vahid Dastjerdi.

11 of the candidates of the group are also in the list of Jameh- ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM) [Militant Clergy Association] of Tehran.

Iran: Militant Clergy Association Lists Tehran Candidates

LD2802092796 Tehran IRNA in English 0823 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 28, IRNA — Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM) [Militant Clergy Association] of Tehran has published its list of 30 candidates to run in the forthcoming Majles elections for Tehran's 30-seat constituency. The list, printed in the morning Persian daily 'JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI' on Wednesday, is as follows:

'Abbas Sheybani, Mohammad Javad Larijani, Mohsen Yahyavi, Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mahmud Do'a'i, Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Movahedi Savaji, Hojjat ol-Eslam Hasan Rowhani, 'Ali 'Abasspur, 'Ali Naqi Khamushi, Morteza Nabavi, Hojjat ol-Eslam Qorban 'Ali Dorri Najafabadi, Hojjat ol-Eslam Reza Taqavi, Habibollah Askar-Owladi [Mosalman], Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Abutorabi, Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Musavi Hoseyni, Musa Zargar, Davud Danesh Ja'fari, Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Abdolhoseyn Mo'ezi, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohsen Mojtahed Shabestari, Mohammad Reza Bahonar, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad 'Ali Movahedi-Kermani, Dr. Shahebeddin Sadr, Hojjat ol-Eslam Reza Akrami, Asadollah Badamchian, Ms. Parvin Salihi, Ms. Monireh Nowbakht, Ms. Marzieh Vahid Dastjerdi, Nafiseh Fayaz Bakhsh, Ms. Mariam Behruzi, Mohammad Asghari.

According to the election law, all candidates are to launch election campaign for a period of one week beginning Thursday morning.

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A total of 3,232 contenders are to compete for 270 seats in the March 8 elections, the fifth since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Of the total 420 are contenders in Tehran constituency and the remaining in 195 constituencies throughout the country.

Iran: Law Enforcement Forces To Maintain Security During Polling

LD2802101396 Tehran IRNA in English 0959 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 28, IRNA — Commander of the law enforcement forces, Brigadier Reza Seyfollahi, stressed here Tuesday [27 February] that the forces will maintain security in election constituencies.

He said that around 40,000 other armed forces personnel are to cooperate with his forces in maintaining security during the fifth Majlis polls.

Referring to higher number of ballot boxes and election constituencies in the fifth Majlis elections, to be held on March 8, he said that more than 170,000 law enforcement staff will be on duty to oversee the elections.

Seyfollahi urged disciplinary forces not to interfere in the voting process and to avoid taking side with any political group or candidate.

Iran: Political Use of Phrases 'Borrowed From Foreigners' Criticized

NC2802105696 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 18 Feb 96 p 2

[Commentary by Hoseyn Shari'atmadari: "Alien Prototypes"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Lately, newspapers and various circles have been using terms to describe political factions and processes, terms sometimes borrowed directly from foreign dictionaries and used as borrowed prototypes—without heeding their true meaning—to label the existing political factions in the country. Some are phrases that have no roots in etymology, but are "introduced" without any clear meaning. It is unclear what scientific, social, or political competence those who use them have. The use of such terms borrowed from foreigners—terms such as "the traditional right," "the modern right," "the left," "the new left", and so on—is alien to our Islamic culture and will result in the following damage:

A. The use of borrowed words is a means for the West's deviatory political culture to enter the country's political scene.

B. The use of such terms disturbs reliance on Islamic criteria and values.

C. And, since foreign and "invented" phrases do not conform with the Islamic culture that prevails among the people, they wrongly identify political processes, which, in turn, become vulnerable. But the logical question is: What role has the rich Islamic culture played in the creation and use of such terms? What is the motive behind this illogical imitation and repetition by rote of such terminology? And why are newspapers and political circles using such terms?!

The creation and use of such terms in our country is linked with a period not too long ago, and its origins should be sought in the political grouplets and processes of that time. These political grouplets and processes created and used such terms for the following reasons:

1. To prevent their supporters from thinking, since supporters need to analyze political issues and processes; if they started to analyze these issues they would acquire a different understanding from their leaders. This different understanding would jeopardize the group's existence, even threaten it with disintegration. The concern that group leaders feel about the danger threatening their existence and followers' and supporters' need to analyze issues made group leaders consider the use of controlled prototypes and patterns of thought and placing these thoughts within the narrow frameworks of those prototypes. In this way, first, the followers were made to think they had an easy solution for analyzing political processes and, second, the thoughts of the followers were harnessed. This was why the grouplets' supporters in those days became confused. And when they realized that the prototypes being offered for analysis and comment could not satisfy their truth-seeking spirit, they found themselves trapped in an "identity crisis" and turned full circle on their original positions.

2. Another one of the major factors turning the political groups and processes in those days toward such phrases was to insult their rivals. This usually happened when group leaders could not approach their opponents' views scientifically and logically. For example, the monafeqin [hypocrites—pejorative for the Mojahedine Khalq Organization] and the Marxists clearly knew that if their supporters became acquainted with the works of martyred scholar Morteza Motahhari, they would lose their materialistic and atheistic outlooks. It was to prevent their supporters from gaining access to Motahhari's works and to prevent them from awakening that group leaders, in their propaganda, referred to Motahhari as a "reactionary" (!) with traces of "mini-bourgeoisie" and so on.

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3. Another element encouraging political groups and processes in those times to use borrowed and foreign terms was an "inferiority complex." And we should ask the revolutionary and pious forces: Why, instead of using foreign and borrowed terms, do they not use familiar and Islamic terms? And why, instead of foreign labels, do they not expose the true views of the political factions to scientific and documented criticism? Is this not closer to Islamic culture?

Iran: Questions on Elections, Funding Discussed

NC2802121696 Tehran SALAM in Persian 8 Feb 96 p 3

[From the "Hello SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Unidentified caller] You say the leftist faction will not participate in the elections. How come Behzad Nabavi [of the Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution Organization] has said he will participate in the fifth term elections?

[SALAM] We do not recall making any such statement. We inform the public about any report we get. We were told that the Tehran Militant Clerics would not hand in a list of candidates. We, in turn, told our readers. We were also told that the Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution Organization would submit a list. Again we told our readers. If we receive another report from this group we will again tell the public.

[Unidentified caller] We read a report in BAHMAN in relation with the election campaign by the traditional rightist faction. The report indicated that this faction received 200 million tumans from the representative of a foreign car company in Iran. Could the representative have handed over this amount to the traditional rightist faction without any conditions? Or were there strings attached? Do you see no similarity between the era of no news during the Qajar dynasty and today?

[SALAM] There are only rumors, no concrete news on all this. There is a rumor that a renowned figure from the traditional rightist faction called on capitalists and businessmen to extend financial assistance—probably for the election campaign—and that the people at the meeting agreed to pay between 2 million and 50 million tumans. Possibly, a brief comment in a daily newspaper referred to this. We hope the various spokesmen for the traditional right, especially those who demanded the bill for America's $20 million, will explain the truth behind these rumors. It is rumored that the foreign car company representative, who pledged to pay 200 billion tumans, deals with unauthorized foreign cars. Some 15,000 such cars are impounded in the country's customs houses.

[Unidentified caller] SALAM constantly calls on the people to put forth candidates or to stand themselves. Yet it states that the Militant Clerics will not submit candidates. What I assume from all this is that SALAM wants to break the votes of the rightist faction and divide them up among the other strata. If this is the case, why does it not write about the heterodox, because heterodox people too will naturally participate in the elections. Does this not show a policy of double standards? Does this not show that SALAM promotes only some people and writes nothing about others?

[SALAM] If, by heterodox, you mean the supporters of the Freedom Movement, then, according to rumors, they too have registered in Tehran and in other cities. Since the other comments by this reader were unclear, we will not answer. [passage omitted]

Iran: Vice President, ICA Official Air Views on Electioneering

NC2802140696 Tehran SALAM in Persian 14 Feb 96 p 1

[Report on interviews with 'Ataollah Mohajerani, Iranian vice president for legal and parliamentary affairs, and Asadollah Badamchian, secretary general of the Islamic Coalition Association (ICA), by unidentified correspondent in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] The two main principles of recent political moves by the Servants of Reconstruction [Khedmatgozaran-e Sazandegi] are the concurrence of the great leader of the revolution and the legal nature of their movement.

The vice president for legal and parliamentary affairs, 'Ataollah Mohajerani, said this while addressing a students' gathering at Tehran University. He said: When we issued our statement we hoped that compassionate and dedicated faces, such as Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin 'Abdollah Nuri, Dr. Mo'in, and others with much experience on the scene of the country's executive affairs, would now be alongside one another.

Mohajerani and Asadollah Badamchian, the secretary general of the ICA, were addressing a question-and-answer session at Tehran University. Mohajerani said: When we issued our statement we wondered why 2.5 million people participated in the first election and, despite the rise in the population, why only 1.7 million voted in the fourth Majles election. Mohajerani added: Our statement met two reactions. One was a massive welcome. The other was a bitter attitude toward us. We view the harshness and indignation toward our statement as a calculated political move. We kept quiet and deferred judgment on the issue to the great

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leader. His eminence conferred with cabinet members and said there was no obstacle to the nomination of candidates as long as they were, not ministers, but deputy ministers, the Tehran mayor and so on, and could nominate [themselves as] candidates without mentioning their posts or executive positions. We said that if his eminence the great leader were displeased by our actions, we would suspend them.

As for differences between the group known as the Servants of Reconstruction and the Tehran Militant Clergy Association [TMCA], he said: Like our friends in the TMCA, we also believe in the revolution, the system, the principle of the Velayat-e Faqih. But, as you see, the TMCA did not agree to include five of the candidates we proposed in its list.

Asked about his response regarding legal problems that have surfaced concerning the statement by the Servants of Reconstruction, Mohajerani stated: We are acting according to the electoral laws and any objections should be propounded. We are not a political party. Some of our friends said that if we had requested a license from the committee on Article 10, we would have had to wait until the sixth Majles elections.

He continued: We did not intend to obtain a license and we did not discuss the possibility of a delay, as we are not a political party.

He stated: Our strength is evident from the intensity of the reaction and harsh reciprocal moves. He referred to the charges of the Servants of Reconstruction, monopolizing all the propaganda billboards, and asserted: These billboards are not the property of the municipality. The paper was handed by the Tehran mayor to the great leader. Some TMCA members also took steps to rent the billboards but retracted their request. Otherwise we would not have taken all the billboards.

Commenting on the various groups' electioneering expenses, the vice president for legal and parliamentary affairs said: We are using our personal income for our electioneering expenses, unlike others. Some industrialists told us they were willing to help us, just as some magnates and bazaar merchants were ready to help the TMCA.

Asadollah Badamchian explained the ICA's response to the Servants of Reconstruction statement: We feel a sense of danger about the nomination of candidates by vice presidents and executive officials. This sense of danger concerns preserving the principles of the revolution. He added: The Servants of Reconstruction statement has created a dichotomy in the government. The issue did not surface easily by itself, but was planned.

He added: The country does not belong to a particular group. All the forces should participate. The TMCA members did not consider it expedient to include the names of the Servants of Reconstruction candidates on their list, as it would create problems.

Regarding the financial sources of the groups participating in the elections, he said: The magnates are helping us a great deal but the opulent do not see eye to eye with us, since we oppose capitalism.

Badamchian was asked: If there was a sense of danger in the vice presidents nominating candidates without mentioning their departments, why did the great leader not sense this danger and issue a warning instead of, according to Mohajerani, permitting officials to nominate candidates without mentioning their positions? Badamchian responded: There is no problem with presenting a list without mentioning officials' posts and responsibilities.

Iran: Reader's Question on Need for Presidency Answered

NC2802115796 Tehran SALAM in Persian 12 Feb 96 p 2

["Special Answer to a Telephone Call" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] I think it would be better for the leader to be elected by the people's direct vote and for the presidential post to be dissolved. We should use the same method used during the era of Imam 'Ali, peace be upon him, when the people stated their allegiance directly to him.

[SALAM] Perhaps the Constitution envisaged the position of president because of the special conditions that the Imam [Khomeyni], may his soul be sanctified, faced and because he could not take personal charge of all the executive affairs. Foreign relations and their considerations meant it was not expedient for the leader to be directly involved in its commitments. There could have been other reasons.

In the first years of the revolution, Sa'd Mujabbar, then Libyan ambassador to Iran, told a member of the Majles board of directors: What you have done in Iran, like the Majles and other issues, are un-Islamic. In Islam one person is the leader of the Muslims. The rest are all his officials and there is no need for you to do such things—meaning forming the Majles and sharing powers. We will not get into this topic now. We will only refer to one point: If, during the era of Imam 'Ali, peace be upon him, there was a specific problem with forming a government because of circumstances at the time, it does not necessarily mean that that type of organization and structure should always be implemented to make a

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rule Islamic. If Imam 'Ali himself were in power today he would construct a system that was much different from the system he used 1,400 years ago. In the same way, if Imam Khomeyni, may his soul be sanctified, had formed an Islamic rule two or three centuries ago, it would not have been the same as today. The formation and organization of a rule depend on conditions. It is an experience that evolves, like all other social and humanitarian issues, through tests and trials to approach perfection.

Iran: Rafsanjani Sends Message to Energy Congress

LD2602141996 IRNA in English
1322 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi—Rafsanjani urged the participants in the second national congress on energy and economy to formulate policies for optimal use of energy resources in the country.

In a message to the gathering inaugurated in the presence of Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh and a number of senior oil and gas experts here Monday, the president noted that under the status quo, optimal utilization of energy resources meant reasonable consumption of energy and prevention of wastage. He stressed that ways to optimize energy consumption should be explored through holding similar gatherings.

The president recommended the participants to adopt policies in energy sector in a manner that may not create any obstacle in the way of economic and social development, and national security.

Moreover, the message read, development policies in energy sector and in the field of energy consumption in the initial stages should not hinder development of production or affect the issue of employment. He underlined the need for cooperation of producers and consumers in adopting policies in the field of energy and its economization.

In his message, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani underscored the importance of gatherings which could pinpoint possibilities and bottlenecks in energy production and consumption within the framework of national economy and could find practical solutions in order to overcome shortcomings in such a vital sector.

Stressing that energy should be regarded as one of the main basis for economic, social and infrastructural foundations towards industrialization, the president said that materialization of sustainable economic development would be possible only through proper use of energy.

The trend of development, despite remarkable achievements in the past few years, has still a long way to go and per capita energy consumption will increase in future, the message read.

The president also recommended the participants in the congress to find ways and means for optimum use of gas resources for which iran ranks second in the world.

Searching for economic priorities which could replace parts of oil consumption with natural gas as well as investment in the area of gas exports is a subject which needs expert studies, the president stressed in his message.

Iran: President Rafsanjani Meets With Council of Experts

LD2702214596 Tehran IRNA in English
2043 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 27 (IRNA) — President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani told members of the Experts Council here Tuesday that the Iranian nation had foiled the hostile plots of their foreign enemies mainly by relying on a supreme religious jurisprudent as the principal ideological pivot of the Islamic revolution.

He brought up also the controversy of the social equity being or not being intrinsically against economic development saying that the two had to be viewed as parallel elements without either inherently going against the other.

President Rafsanjani said a lot of development and public utility projects undertaken by the administration were also inherently conducive to social equity.

He said, for example, that currently 96 percent of the total population in Iran had the benefit of electrical power and potable water and basic health services which, he said, were manifestations of his administration's concern about social equity.

He said the Iranian Government had regularly contributed large sums of money in terms of subsidies to food items and to certain public services which, he said, was just another evidence of the concern of the government for more equitable services for a larger population.

President Rafsanjani said economically and in terms of foreign revenue Iran enjoyed a solid status with a zero budget deficit which, he said, was a national pride.

Chairman of the Assembly of Experts Ayatollah Meshkini, meanwhile, expressed hope in the same meeting with President Rafsanjani that the fifth term of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majles) would prove the best, so far, from the point of view of the professional adequacy and ideological propriety of its members.

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Iran: Tehran Comments on Khamene'i's Remarks to Experts

NC2802115996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 28 Feb 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] In his meeting with members of the Council of Experts, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, the great leader of the Islamic Revolution, stated that despite the astonishing efforts of arrogance to impose economic and financial sanctions on Iran and prevent other countries from having links with Iran, there are extensive ties between Iran and various countries. This displays the influence, strength, and credibility of Islamic Iran. On this basis, the Islamic Republic's strength and credibility and its powerful presence in global issues, coupled with its great achievements at home, are an inspiration for the Muslim nations.

The inability of arrogance to stage an all-aspected confrontation of our country stems from the genuine ideological and cultural inclinations that have fulfilled the Islamic Republic's independence and self-reliance, inclinations that have placed the country and society on an independent path to grandeur, a path that is not subject to arrogant policies. Natural and divine blessings such as Iran's special geographic position have made various countries hasten their efforts to establish mutual relations and cooperation with Iran. Naturally this process is increasing daily despite persistent efforts by global arrogance to isolate our country. This displays the Islamic Republic's strength and credibility.

Events on the international scene and in relation with Iran represent the expansion of relations that pursue an independent and liberating road contrary to colonialist equations and pave the way for countries that want to free themselves of the diktat of the big and arrogant powers.

Under such conditions, arrogance focuses on obstructing this process, especially on striking at the center and source that inspires it. As the esteemed leader said in referring to such efforts by arrogance: The cultural onslaught is one of the enemy's methods aimed at undermining the country from within. Questioning and undermining the exigencies of Iran, particularly the issue of the supreme jurisconsult, are among other topics to which many foreign mass media are devoted.

The esteemed leader's remarks refer to the policies and plots that target the major elements of strength, independence, and credibility of the Iranian nation and that want, more than anything, to remove the sources that have inspired and created the great system of the Islamic Republic and other Islamic movements. These plots and policies neglect that—thanks to the alert Iranian people and the aware Islamic world—not only will Iran remain steadfast and strong, but it will continue to positively affect countries everywhere and see the emergence of a world free from oppression and colonialism.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Indian 'Unprovoked' Shooting Reported on Punjab Border

BK2802082496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 28 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Indian troops resorted to unprovoked firing last evening for the second day running along the working boundary in the Sialkot area. Giving details of fresh border violations by the Indians, a spokesman of the Ministry of Defense told Radio Pakistan's representative in Rawalpindi today that the troops opened fire on the Pakistan rangers patrol east of Sialkot. Pakistani rangers retaliated to silence the Indian side. Indians resumed unprovoked fire 10 minutes later from the post of (Chablial), which continued for two hours. No loss of life was reported from either side.

Pakistan: Iran Reportedly Planning 'Major Offensive' Against Taleban

BK2702150396 Karachi DAWN in English 21 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Anjum Niaz]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Feb 20 — Pakistan successfully resisted an Iranian attempt to act as an intermediary between Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Sheikh and Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Najibollah Lafra'i in Tehran until Kabul first offered an unconditional apology and paid compensation for the ransacking of its mission in Kabul, informed sources told Dawn here on Tuesday.

"An impression has been created by a foreign news agency that Iran 'mediated' between Pakistan and Afghanistan at the recently concluded talks in Tehran," the sources said.

"While Iran insisted on trilateral talks and wanted to act as a broker between Sheikh and Lafra'i, Islamabad made it very clear from the beginning that it was not willing to sit with Lafra'i on the negotiating table until Rabbani apologized."

Political analysts say the Tehran talks on Afghanistan failed to make any kind of significant breakthrough.

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"Since Iran has yet to prove its credentials by claiming support from major Afghan political parties, it is looking towards Pakistan to provide such a forum for a conference on Afghanistan, insisting all the while that the present government in Kabul is legitimate."

Iran presently has a "superficial role" in Afghanistan as it only commands support from Rabbani, Ettehad-e Eslami chief Rasul Sayyaf and Hezb-e Eslami leader Golboddin Hekmatyar. With such a "small niche" in Afghanistan, Tehran which is politically isolated from the world community, has "hegemonistic aspirations" in Afghanistan, the analysts say.

"Nor has Iran's treatment towards the 1.4 million Afghan refugees endeared it to the Afghan people," said the sources. President Rabbani has been known to criticize the role of the Iranian government which set up labor camps for the refugees. Iran had neither paid the 50 million dollars it pledged to Afghanistan.

According to reports, Iran is preparing for a major offensive against the Taleban in Herat: "it has trained 6,000-8,000 troops which will be led by the deposed governor of Herat, Commander Ismail Khan," the sources told this correspondent.

The Iranian-backed offensive, originally planned for Feb 9, has now been put off after Id al-Fitr [21 February]. Iranian fighter aircraft are likely to be used in support of the attack in the garb of Rabbani-Dostam aircraft.

According to reports, three sites have been selected for the attack, one each about 25 kilometres north and south of Eslam Qal'eh and one from Qal'eh Kah in Farah province.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Military Believes LTTE Preparing To Deploy Submarines

BK2502114696 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The military believes that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] is on the verge of deploying underwater craft against strategic targets. There have been seven unconfirmed reports of submarines being sighted off the coast of Sri Lanka. Within the past few weeks, there were many cases of fishermen and police officers reporting unidentified craft which had suddenly disappeared below the surface. Alarmed by these reports, the military says it has taken a series of countermeasures.

Military officers say that the Armed Forces had acquired the capability to detect any submarine. The Navy has secured weapons and ammunition which could be used against hostile underwater craft. The new equipment will be used to provide better security for Sri Lankan ports and vessels. A 4-km area around the port of Colombo was declared a national security zone recently.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Report Views India's Role Against LTTE

BK2302150596 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A day of tribute was observed in Wanni to honor the five Sea Tigers who embraced martyrdom in the confrontation last Wednesday, 14 February, with Indian and Sri Lankan naval forces on Tamil Eelam territorial waters. Among the Sea Black Tigers martyred were Lieutenant Colonel Chothithambi and Major Vengai. Portraits of these five great heroes were carried in a procession on vehicles. A large number of people gathered to pay homage to the heroes.

A Jaffna newspaper has pointed out that India's tendency to join hands with the racist Sri Lankan Government and act against Tamils is outrageous. Saying that the ban imposed by the Indian Government against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] on its soil is within the jurisdiction of its territory and not something beyond its borders, the paper also pointed out the fact that Indian troops, on an earlier occasion, intercepted two LTTE ships and seized one of them. The LTTE cadres blew up the second ship and embraced martyrdom when Indian troops attempted to seize the second ship with Colonel Kittu on board.

Saying that the 14 February incident was extraordinary and not the usual Indian stance, the paper also noted that it reflects the fact that India is not only ready to provide military equipment but is also prepared to assist Sri Lanka in carrying out offensives directly or indirectly against the LTTE. The paper also noted that this stance reflects India's readiness to extend direct help to Buddhist and Sinhalese racists in committing the genocide of Tamils.

It may be recalled that there have been several reports about the recent movement of submarines under mysterious circumstances in the territorial waters along (?Negombo) and Pottuvil. A suspicion has cropped up in the people's minds that these submarines probably belong to the Indian Navy.

The LTTE launched a surprise attack against Sri Lankan troops in the Jaffna-Vannarpannai locality last Thursday. There have been no further reports about the offensive carried out on Thursday morning.

Sri Lanka's opposition leader Ranil Wickremasinghe has stated that the invasion and capture of Jaffna has

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proven to be a strategic failure. Saying that the government is now looking for ways to dispatch supplies to the 40,000 troops deployed in Weligama, he pointed out that the government, which claims that it launched the war to achieve peace, has suffered total failure in achieving its objective.

Sri Lankan troops launched missile attacks from the Palali and Walana military camps toward the civilian population at 1050 on the morning of 16 February. Tondaimanar and Garudavil are the areas that were attacked. Meanwhile, missile attacks were also carried out from the Palali military camp toward Vadamarachchi yesterday morning. The Sri Lankan troop attacks that commenced yesterday morning continued until noon. Details of the damage incurred is not known.

The thirst of the Tigers is the motherland of Tamil Eelam.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Report Claims Torture of Civilians by Troops

BK2402141796 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mathiyazhagan, a university student traveling to Colombo, was tortured to death by Sri Lankan troops at Tandikkulam Detention Camp on 12 February. The troops separated eight youths from the travelers, locked them in a room, and tortured them. Saying the eight were accomplices of suicide squads, the troops brutally assaulted them. Mathiyazhagan, the university student, was strangled, ruthlessly tortured, and killed in cold blood by a military officer. The others were also subjected to severe torture. A Mr. Chandran from Chavakachcheri, an eyewitness to the ghastly incident who lost an eye during the torture, reported the incident to the correspondent of a Jaffna newspaper.

It is reported that two fishermen who were fishing off the Nakarkoyil coast on 13 February did not return home. It has also been reported that Kuttiyan, 39, a migrant from Mayiliddi to Nakarkoyil, and Vedalaya Singham, 50, of Nakarkoyil, who went out fishing on the same boat, have been missing for six days. Efforts to determine their fate have proved futile.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] recovered the bodies of two Special Task Force [STF] commandos during an attack on an STF unit patrolling in Pullumalai, Batticaloa District. The two bodies were handed over to the Sri Lankan armed forces through the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Four civilians who went to the Puthur Manal area to inspect the houses and property they left behind were arrested by Sri Lankan troops. Two others managed to escape.

Sri Lankan troops deployed in Walgama resorted to indiscriminate and incessant missile attacks for an hour from 0530 to 0630 yesterday morning. These attacks were carried out against the bridge and estates in Kaitadi and Kopay localities as well as the Puthur and Nirveli areas. Meanwhile, rockets launched from the Palali military base landed and blew up in Velvedditurai, Urikkadu, and Geruda [last two place names as transliterated] localities at noon.

Sri Lankan troops besieging Vavuniya city for the past few days have arrested several truck drivers and cleaners. A number of civilians have also been arrested and detained at Vavuniya Tamil High School and photographed based on the word of (?informers). Of those paraded before (?the informers), 10 people were arrested and taken away under the pretext of further interrogation. Meanwhile, if travelers passing through Tandikkulam Detention Camp stay in Vavuniya city even a little longer than the time allotted to them, they are arrested and detained by Sri Lankan troops without any investigation.

All political parties in Tamil Nadu have expressed their indignation over the incident in which Indian troops worked in collusion with Sri Lankan troops against the LTTE in the territorial waters of Tamil Eelam on Wednesday [14 February]. These parties plan to carry out a concerted campaign against the Indian Government's stance. Meanwhile, several parties are holding a mammoth protest on 23 February. Moreover, it has been reported that a number of parties will organize continuous campaigns throughout Tamil Nadu from 28 February onward to expose the insidious nature of the Indian Government. This multiparty campaign has been organized by Mr. P. Nedumaran.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Report Details Military Atrocities

BK2502163696 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A number of Tamil prisoners who have been detained at the Colombo Mahasin [as transliterated] prison on charges of being members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] or for assisting the LTTE were badly manhandled by prison guards yesterday. It was learned that a group of prison guards entered cells with canes and batons and brutally attacked Tamil youths, injuring a number of them. The youths who managed to escape said that four of them were badly assaulted and would have been killed.

It has been reported that a pathetic situation prevails at the Vavuniya railway station camp, where men and

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women are accommodated in the same hall. Travelers proceeding to Colombo from the north are being detained by the military at the railway station. They are harassed by the military and are allowed to proceed to Colombo only after a prolonged hassle.

Reverend Father Immanuel Pious [name as transliterated], who was arrested in Tandikkulam last year on charges of assisting the LTTE and possessing incriminating materials, has now been released. The reverend father has said that he was in possession of photographs depicting atrocities by Sri Lankan troops against the people of Tamil Eelam. He added that, when asked by the troops why he was carrying them, he said it was to reveal the pathetic condition of the Tamils to the heads of churches and to the Sinhalese people.

The military has been refusing permission for youths to pass through Tandikkulam over the past four days. The military only refuses permission to pass through Tandikkulam to those under 20 years of age. Military officials say that the LTTE cadres infiltrate into Colombo only through the Tandikkulam military checkpoint.

In its editorial today, a newspaper published in Jaffna says: The Sri Lankan Government, which cannot defeat the LTTE militarily, has been adopting effective measures to defeat the LTTE through diplomatic channels. As a vital step to achieve this goal, the Sri Lankan president and foreign minister are engaged in efforts to close down LTTE offices in foreign countries. No country, however, has come forward to ban the LTTE, which is another failure of the Sri Lankan Government on the diplomatic front.

The dense forest between Valaichchenai and Ottamawadi in Batticaloa District has been destroyed by the military. The armed forces say that, with only the help of this jungle and the Batticaloa tank, the LTTE has been launching attacks against them; hence, they have decided to destroy the forest. The armed forces are forcing the local people to cut the trees down. The troops seize the identity cards of the men and return the cards to the owners only after they cut some trees.

The thirst of the Tigers is the motherland of Tamil Eelam.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Report Notes Military's 'Excesses'

BK2502164596 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Military excesses against the people proceeding to Colombo via Tandikkulam have been increasing daily. Those who proceed to Colombo have been branded as Black Tigers and are badly assaulted by the military. A woman who was to travel to a foreign country for her marriage was branded a Black Tiger by the military and was badly assaulted. University student Mathiyazhagan was killed when eight people were detained from among those proceeding to Colombo last week and were attacked. It has also been reported that the military has sent others back, warning them not to venture to Colombo again.

Colombo is suffering under a severe strain due to the steps taken by the Sri Lankan Government in the name of security measures. These measures have affected the daily life of the residents of Colombo, and the people are disenchanted with the military as well as the government.

Heavy missile attacks were carried out the day before yesterday against the main localities of Velvedditurai. These attacks were launched toward the civilian settlements in the Vallai, Palankadu, Nediakadu, [placenames as transliterated] and Kottawatta areas, causing severe damage in those localities.

Sri Lankan opposition leader Ranil Wickremasinghe has said that the absence of a complete exodus of people from Jaffna during the raid against the city is a strategic failure of the Sri Lankan Government's military approach. He added that, instead of resolving problems, the present government has created additional problems by resorting to military action without any clear-cut strategy that has long- or short-term objectives.

Arrangements have been made to run schools in Kilinochchi in two shifts for the benefit of students who are currently staying in the Kilinochchi area after being displaced from Weligama. Kilinochchi educational officer Duraisingham has announced that this system will come into effect on 1 March.

The ban imposed by the military hampers people from the north who are seriously ill from going to Colombo or other places for the medical treatment they choose. Those who are shifted to Colombo due to acute (?illness) are allowed to go to Colombo only after doctors confirm that they cannot be treated at the Vavuniya hospital. It has been learned that the military is doing so with a view to reducing the number of people traveling to Colombo.

The thirst of the Tigers is the motherland of Tamil Eelam.

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